

BUDDY

in SCHOOL



HOWARD R. GARIS





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BUDDY PUT HIS ARMS AROUND HIS PET'S NECK.
"Buddy in School"

Buddy in School

or

A Boy and His Dog

BY

HOWARD R. GARIS

*Author of "Buddy on the Farm," "Buddy and His
Winter Fun," The "Curlytops" Series, The
"Uncle Wiggily" books, etc.*

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THE BUDDY BOOKS

By HOWARD R. GARIS

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BUDDY ON THE FARM

Or, A Boy and His Prize Pumpkin

BUDDY IN SCHOOL

Or, A Boy and His Dog

BUDDY AND HIS WINTER FUN

Or, A Boy In a Snow Camp

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Buddy in School

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BUDDY IN SCHOOL

CHAPTER I

BUDDY AND THE CAN

COME, Buddy! Wake up! Don't be late!" Mrs. Martyne gently shook the bed in which the boy was sleeping. He slowly opened his eyes and smiled at her.

"Come, Buddy! Hurry!" said his mother.

"Oh, is it time to go water my pumpkin or gather the eggs?" asked Buddy and he suddenly sat up and blinked his eyes for the sun was brightly shining in his room.

"There aren't any pumpkins or eggs to think about now, Buddy," his mother answered with a smile. "You aren't down on Grandpa's farm. You are home and in bed, but unless you get up quickly, and dress,

you may be late for school. Hurry, Buddy!"

"Oh, school!" exclaimed Buddy. "School?"

"Yes, surely, school!" laughed Mrs. Martyne. "Have you forgotten, Buddy, that school begins today? You have been having so much fun this vacation that, I suppose, you haven't thought of school."

"Oh, yes! I want to go to school!" cried Buddy. "I was dreaming I was back on the farm," he said with a laugh, "and a Gypsy boy was trying to take my pumpkin. Oh, I'm glad I'm going back to school! I'll have a lot of fun!"

Buddy ran into the bathroom and was soon splashing in the water, while his mother went downstairs to see that Lola Wagg, the cook, had started to get breakfast. Sometimes Lola was a bit slow, and Mrs. Martyne did not want Buddy to be late on the first day of the new term of school.

"But even if I was late," said Buddy, as he ate his breakfast, "I could get there on time."

"How could you?" asked his father who was

hurrying to get to his law office. "How, Buddy?"

"I could go fast on my new roller skates."

"No, don't take your skates to school the first day," his mother said. "You will be going into a new class and a different room than Miss Borden's, where you were in the spring, and your skates would only be in the way."

"Yes, I guess they would," Buddy agreed. "Well, then, I'll run."

"Oh, you have plenty of time," his father said, looking at his watch. "Don't get too excited."

But Buddy couldn't help being excited. He was that kind of a boy, always eager to do things whether it was to go to school or come home to have fun with his chums. Buddy was always very much in earnest about everything.

He finished his breakfast, ran upstairs to clean his teeth, came sliding down the banister railing, singing and whistling by turns, and then dashed out of the house.

"Don't forget your books, Buddy!" his

mother called to him. "Take your books!"

"I won't need the books I had last term," he answered, pausing at the front gate.

"No matter. You must take your old books back before you can get the new ones. Here they are!"

She hurried to the door with the strap of books which were the same ones Buddy had tossed up into a tree that last day of school in June.

"Throw 'em here, Mother! I'll catch 'em!" called Buddy.

"Are you sure?" asked Mrs. Martyne.

"Sure!" Buddy answered. "Don't I play on the ball nine? Throw the books to me!"

So Mrs. Martyne, standing on the stoop, tossed the strap of books to her son and he caught them, easily, and then ran off down the street, swinging the books in the leather strap and whistling a gay little tune.

"Taking care of a prize pumpkin on Grandpa's farm was fun," said Buddy to himself as he hurried along the street, "and so is going

back to school. Hurray! Everything is fun!”

And so it seemed to the jolly red-haired and blue-eyed boy who was called “Buddy” by everyone though his real name was Dick.

As he hurried along, Buddy looked around now and then, and glanced down each side street as he passed a corner, thinking he might see some of his chums. But no other boys or girls appeared to be in sight.

“Either I’m early or they’re late,” thought Buddy as he caught sight of none of his playmates. “I wonder if our clock was wrong?”

But as he passed Mr. Trapp’s jewelry store he looked in the window and saw, by a big clock, that it was only half past eight. Buddy was quite early since school did not begin until nine o’clock and he did not have far to go.

“We’d have time for a game of marbles or leap frog if I could see some of the boys,” said Buddy to himself as he began skipping along. Walking was too slow on such a fine, crisp September morning as this. Buddy felt that he ought to skip, run or jump all the way.

However, he saw none of his chums and he was wondering about this and he was thinking about the new class he would go in, and he was wishing he could have a little fun before he had to go to school when on the sidewalk, just ahead of him, he saw a large, tin can.

“I’ll make believe it’s a football and kick it!” said Buddy to himself. “I’ll kick it all the way to school. It will make a dandy noise.”

Buddy liked to hear his fun as well as see it and he knew, from having kicked old tin cans before, that they made a fine racket as they rolled along the pavement.

Slinging his strap of books over his shoulder, Buddy took a little run to get a good start and then aimed a kick at the empty can which stood on end. Once it had held tomatoes, as Buddy could tell from part of the picture label still on the tin.

“Plunk!” His shoe hit the can squarely and sent it bounding and rolling down the street! What a fine rattling noise it made!

“Whoop!” yelled Buddy jumping up in the

air and clicking his heels together twice. "If I was playing football that would have been a field goal!"

Buddy had a little trick of jumping up and clicking his heels together whenever anything pleased him. He had learned the trick from his Uncle Henry.

There had been a time when Buddy could only click his heels together once as he jumped up. But by long practice he had learned to do it twice. Uncle Henry could click his heels three times and when he grew a little older and bigger Buddy hoped to be able to do the same thing. But twice was pretty good for a small boy.

"Now for another kick!" cried Buddy as he raced after the can which was still bounding along the pavement. It had rolled quite straight and did not curve off into the gutter or against the sides of the buildings as it might have done.

The can came to a stop in front of Mr. Rudolph's toy store. Buddy paused a moment to

look in the window and he saw some more of the same kind of rubber-wheeled roller skates that he had bought a few days before.

Just as Buddy raised his foot to send the can spinning down the sidewalk once more, a boy, whose hands and face were tanned as brown as those of an Indian, came shuffling around the corner. For a moment Buddy thought the strange lad might be an Indian. He was bigger and older than Buddy.

"Hey, let that can alone!" gruffly called the dark boy as Buddy drew back his foot for a kick.

"What's that?" asked Buddy in surprise.
"What'd you say?"

"I said let that can alone!" replied the other and he did not smile.

"Pooh! You can't make me let this can alone!" said Buddy who was a sturdy little chap. "It's mine!"

"Yours? Hu! I guess not! That can is mine!" growled the other boy and, really, his voice was angry. "You let it alone!"

“I will not!” said Buddy. “I found that can away back there,” and he pointed behind him. “I kicked it here and I’m going to kick it some more.”

“You are not!” The other boy’s voice was louder now and he shuffled toward Buddy. “That’s my can and I want it!”

“Well, let’s see you get it!” cried Buddy and with that he gave an extra hard kick and the can went sailing down the street, rolling, bumping, clanging and tinkling; making a great racket.

“I’ll fix you for that!” cried the dark boy and he started for Buddy. But Buddy did not wait. On down the street he ran after the can. But after him came the other lad, his long legs going much faster than could Buddy’s short ones.

“I—I guess he’ll catch me!” panted Buddy as he raced along. “But that’s my can and I can kick it as much as I like!”

CHAPTER II

THE GYPSY AND THE DOG

BUDDY MARTYNE played on both the junior baseball nine and the football eleven of Clover School where he was a pupil. Of course he wasn't on either of the big teams, for he was only in the lower grades, but he was a sturdy little chap and one of the best runners, for his age, in the school.

So now, that he had a head-start of the dark boy, and because he had been running when he kicked the can, Buddy was far enough in advance of the other to keep out of his reach half way down the block.

But then, as Buddy looked back over his shoulder, he saw, when near the corner, that the bigger boy was gaining on him.

"He'll catch me before I get to the corner," thought Buddy. "That is unless I do something! And I've got to do it quick!"

And Buddy was the sort of a boy who always did something when he saw trouble ahead of him. He didn't wait for things to happen; he helped himself.

And now, as he looked back and saw that the big boy was still gaining on him, Buddy had an idea of a little trick he could play.

"That can isn't much good," thought Buddy to himself, "and I don't see why he's making such a fuss over it. He can have it if he wants it, after I kick it again. And that's what I'm going to do!"

Buddy was beginning to tire a little now, so he slowed up in his running. On came the big, dark boy with long strides.

"I've got you!" he shouted. "Kick my can; will you! I'll fix you!"

He was very near to Buddy now and reached out a hand to grab the little fellow. But Buddy knew about dodging, from having played football, so he ducked down, swung to one side and the other boy's hands just went swinging through the air over Buddy's head.

At the same time Buddy threw his bundle of books between the other boy's legs and in an instant they had tripped him so that he fell sprawling on the sidewalk.

"How do you like that?" cried Buddy as he dashed to one side, picked up his books and ran on toward the still rolling can.

"I—I'll get you yet!" cried the dark boy as he scrambled to his feet and again raced on after Buddy.

Perhaps if I take just a moment, now, to tell you who Buddy was you will feel as if you knew him better. If you read the book before this called "Buddy on the Farm; or A Boy and His Prize Pumpkin," you are already friends with the little lad. But if you have not read that book you must know that Buddy, or Dick Martyne, was the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Martyne who lived in the small city of Mountchester. Buddy had many friends and playmates, among them being Tom Gordon and Lucy, his sister, Harry Clee, Charlie Taylor, Mary Norse, and Jerry and Agnes Fleck.

Jerry and Agnes were the fattest children in Clover school.

When the classes ended in the spring, and the long vacation started, Buddy had seen, in Mr. Rudolph's toy store window, a wonderful pair of ball bearing roller skates with rubber tires on the wheels to make them very quiet.

Buddy very much wanted these skates but as he already had a good pair of the old fashioned, iron-wheeled ones, his father said, if he wanted a new pair, he must earn the money for them.

"I never can earn five dollars!" said Buddy, this being the price of the wonderful skates. "I only have a dollar 'n sixteen cents saved up in my bank."

Then came an invitation from Grandpa Kendall for the Martyne family to spend the summer on Blue Hill Farm, and of course Buddy went there. How he had many strange adventures, and earned enough money for his skates with his prize pumpkin, is told in the first of these "Buddy Books." It's a jolly story.

And now Buddy was back home in Mountchester, he had started for school but he was not finished with his adventures. For now this dark boy, who, Buddy decided was a Gypsy, was chasing after him.

Buddy ran faster, he thought, than he had ever run in his life before, even at the time when he had the ball and raced down the field to make a touchdown. He might easily have slipped into some of the stores he passed, for he knew who kept nearly all of them, and, in this way, he could easily have escaped from that chasing boy.

But Buddy had a way of his own and he had made up his mind that he was going to give that old tomato can another kick before he let the Gypsy have it.

“Though I can’t think why he wants it!” murmured Buddy.

Buddy ran so fast, and it took the other boy such a long time to get on his feet again after being tripped by the books, that soon our small, red-haired lad was again close behind the can.

“Here goes for the last kick!” cried Buddy as a quick glance over his shoulder showed him the Gypsy to be coming along on the run.

“Plunk!” went Buddy’s shoe against the can.

With a rattle and bang it rolled bumping down the street. But, instead of kicking it straight ahead of him, Buddy had sent the can around the corner and down an alley.

“Chase down there after it if you want it!” cried Buddy to the other boy and then, feeling that he had played this game long enough, Buddy slipped into Mr. Cutter’s butcher shop, almost falling down on the slippery, sawdust-covered floor in his haste.

“Hello, Buddy!” exclaimed Mr. Cutter who was hanging up a ham on a hook in the window. “Do you want anything?”

“I want to get away from a Gypsy boy who is chasing me,” Buddy answered with a smile. “I found a can and kicked it and he said it was his, but I got the best of him. Now I’m tired.”

“A Gypsy; eh?” exclaimed Mr. Cutter.

“There used to be a camp of them out along the state road. But if anybody is chasing you, Buddy, I’ll have something to say about that!”

Mrs. Martyne was one of Mr. Cutter’s best customers and he had known Buddy all his life. The butcher left the ham on the window hook and walked to the door while Buddy sat down on one of the white revolving stools to get his breath.

Just then the Gypsy came running along. But when he looked in the door and saw Buddy, and also saw the big, fat butcher in the doorway, that Gypsy had no further wish to chase the red-haired boy. Buddy thought this would happen and laughed to himself.

“What’s the idea, Gypsy boy?” asked the butcher. “What do you mean by chasing Buddy and taking his can?”

The other lad did not answer but scowled at Buddy and then shuffled off down the alley into which the old tomato can had bounced.

“I guess he won’t bother you any more, Buddy,” said Mr. Cutter with a smile. “Are

you afraid to go on to school? If you are, I'll send my delivery chap with you. He hasn't anything to do just now."

"Oh, no, thank you, I'm not afraid!" said Buddy. "I'll meet some of the other fellows pretty soon, I guess. Anyhow, I don't believe that Gypsy will come after me any more. He just seemed to want that can."

"What did he want of it?" the butcher asked.

"I don't know," Buddy answered. "Unless he wanted to kick it same as I was doing. And he could get a can of his own."

"Sure!" chuckled Mr. Cutter. "There's a lot of old cans in my back yard that he can have for nothing. He was a queer sort of customer, though, Buddy. I wouldn't have anything to do with him if I were you."

"I'm not going to," was the answer. "I guess he's mad at me."

"Mad at you!" exclaimed Mr. Cutter. "What for; just because you kicked a can?"

"That, and because I tripped him up when

I chucked my books at him," Buddy answered, smiling a little.

"Tripped him—with your books? Ha! Ha!" laughed Mr. Cutter. "Tell me about it, Buddy!" and he sat down on another white, revolving stool beside Buddy and whirled himself around, smiling and chuckling as the blue-eyed boy told what had happened.

"Good for you!" exclaimed Mr. Cutter when Buddy had finished. "It served him right! Here, have an apple!" and he took one from a basket and handed it to his visitor. A bright, red apple it was.

"Thank you," said Buddy. "I'll eat it at recess."

"That's so, school begins today," said Mr. Cutter as he looked at a calendar on the wall. "Everybody is back from vacation, so business will be better now. It's always slow in summer. But you'd better skip along, Buddy," he added, looking at his clock. "Don't want to be late the first day, you know."

"I'm going now," Buddy said, noticing that

it was a quarter to nine. He must be in his seat at five minutes of nine. But the school was only around the corner. He could get there in two minutes. He need not hurry.

Mr. Cutter stepped out of his shop and looked down the alley into which Buddy had kicked the can. He wanted to make sure the Gypsy boy was not hiding there to rush out on Buddy when the latter left the meat store.

“He’s away down at the far end, Buddy,” the butcher said. “He won’t see you now.”

“Thank you,” Buddy remarked and then he once more started for school, swinging his strap of books. But as he was about to hurry along the street he looked down the alley to see what the Gypsy might be doing with that can. It was quite a mystery.

And what Buddy saw caused him suddenly to start running; not *away* from the Gypsy but straight *toward* him! For Buddy saw the brown-faced boy in the act of tying that can on the tail of a poor, shivering dog in the alley.

“So that’s why he wanted the can—to tie on

a dog's tail!" cried Buddy, his blue eyes flashing. "Well, I'll make him quit that!"

Swinging his books as if in readiness to bang them on the head of the Gypsy, Buddy rushed toward him down the alley crying:

"Stop that! Let that dog go! Don't you dare tie that tin can on his tail! Stop!"

"Oh, go chase yourself!" growled the Gypsy and, holding the now yelping dog under one arm, with the other hand he slipped over the poor animal's tail a loop of string to which was tied the tin can.

CHAPTER III

A QUEER NOISE

BUDDY was not long in reaching the side of the big Gypsy boy who was holding the squirming, yelping dog. Buddy noticed that the dog's hair was almost the color of his own a rich, brick red that often caused Buddy's chums to call him "Brick-top." But he didn't mind that.

"What are you going to do to that dog?" asked Buddy as he reached the side of the other boy who was stooping down low on the ground.

"Can't you see what I'm going to do?" snapped the Gypsy.

Of course Buddy could. The only reason he asked that question was that he wanted a chance to think what he was going to do to get the frightened dog away.

"You let him go!" exclaimed Buddy firmly.

"Let who go?" snarled the other.

"That dog! Let him go!"

"Go chase yourself!" ordered the Gypsy. He spoke English just as the other boys did in Mountchester, though he used slang as Buddy noticed. He might be able to speak the Gypsy language, too. Buddy wasn't sure about that.

"Go chase yourself!" said the tall, dark lad again. "When I get through tying this can on my dog I'll tie one on you!"

"You won't dare!" cried Buddy. "And that isn't your dog, either!"

"Is he yours?" asked the Gypsy, looking up as he was pulling the loop of the string tight around the dog's tail.

"No, he isn't!" Buddy answered. "But you haven't any right to tie a can on any dog's tail, even if he is yours! And I don't believe this dog is yours. You just found him!"

"Well, what if I did?" and the other laughed. "I'm going to have some fun with

him now! I'll see how fast he can run with this can on his tail. It'll be a lot of fun. Then I'll chase you some more!"

"I'm not afraid of you!" declared Buddy, bravely.

His heart was beating fast and his blue eyes were flashing. He took off his cap and ran his fingers through his red hair. It was almost the color of the dog's shaggy coat, he noticed again.

Buddy was thinking hard. He loved all animals and it made him angry when anyone was cruel to a dog or cat. Suddenly the stray dog gave a yelp of pain and with his brown eyes looked straight into the blue eyes of Buddy. It was more than the small boy could stand.

Fiercely he sprang at the now kneeling Gypsy and cried:

"You let that dog go!"

At the same time Buddy pushed with all his might against the Gypsy. If the bigger boy had been standing up, Buddy's push would not

have upset him. But as he was half stooping, half kneeling it did not take much of a shove to topple him over.

“Hey! What are you doing?” cried the Gypsy to Buddy, trying to keep his balance.

The next moment he went sprawling down in the dust and Buddy, with a quick motion, had pulled the string from the dog’s tail, and, with a swift kick, he sent the can rolling under a fence.

“Come on, Brick!” cried Buddy. In that instant he had given the dog a name—a new name—and had decided what to do with him.

“You’re going to be my dog—if nobody claims you!” Buddy said. “And I don’t believe you were anybody’s dog before—not even his,” and as he started to run away he looked at the Gypsy who was now getting up, an ugly look on his face.

“Come on, Brick!” cried Buddy again. “Come on! Here, Brick!”

Brick—to give the dog the new name which matched his hair, as it matched

Buddy's—Brick followed his new master, joyfully wagging a burr-entangled tail.

“Hey, you! Stop!” yelled the Gypsy.
“Hey!”

He was on his feet, now, and was about to run after Buddy again. But Mr. Cutter, the jolly, big, red-faced butcher, had looked down the alley and had seen what was going on. He hurried toward Buddy and Buddy was glad to notice this. Then the Gypsy saw help coming to the boy he had lately chased and he quickly turned about and slunk away around the corner.

“I'll get you some other time!” he muttered.

“Pooh! I'm not afraid!” said Buddy.
“Come on, Brick!”

The dog again wagged his tail and, reaching up, licked Buddy's hand with a damp, red tongue. By this time Mr. Cutter had come nearer.

“What's the trouble, Buddy?” he asked.

The red-haired boy explained and patted

his new dog's head. The animal seemed happy now, sitting down, looking from Buddy to the butcher and back to the little boy, at the same time contentedly wagging his tail.

"What you going to do with that dog, now you have him?" asked Mr. Cutter. "Want I should take charge of him? He looks like a good dog, only he's thin. Hasn't had much to eat, I guess."

"I'm going to keep him, thank you," said Buddy. "That is if nobody else owns him. That Gypsy said he was his dog."

"He wasn't," said Mr. Cutter. "That dog has been hanging around this alley all last week. I threw him a few scraps, but he was so timid he wouldn't come near me. That Gypsy lad never saw him until just now. I guess he can be your dog, Buddy, if you want to keep him."

"Sure I want to keep him," said Buddy "Why not?"

"Will your mother let you?"

Buddy hadn't thought about that.

"Yes," he said, slowly, "I—I guess she will."

In the distance a bell rang.

"Oh, gee!" exclaimed Buddy. "School!"

"Don't be late!" the butcher warned.

"No, I'm not going to," the little boy answered. "But—this dog—I haven't time to take him home and if I let him go that Gypsy will tie a can on his tail."

"Better leave him in my shop, Buddy."

"No, thank you, Mr. Cutter, he might get away. You'll be so busy you won't have time to watch him."

"Well, that's right, Buddy. I will be pretty busy, with everybody home now and wanting their orders all at once. But if you haven't time to take your dog home——"

"I'll take Brick to school!" suddenly decided Buddy.

"To school?" exclaimed Mr. Cutter in surprise. "And what did you say his name was?"

"I've named him Brick," Buddy answered.

"His hair's sort of brick red, like mine."

"But you can't take a dog to school, even if he has red hair," spoke the butcher laughingly.

"I didn't just mean I'd take him right in school—in my class," Buddy explained. "But I can tie him up in the basement, or in the yard, I guess. I can use my book strap."

"Well, I suppose you can do that," agreed Mr. Cutter. "But if you want me to I'll look after Brick until you get out."

"Thank you," said Buddy, politely, "but that Gypsy might sneak in when you were busy and get him. I'll take my dog with me. Come on, Brick!"

Buddy hurried off in the direction of the school and the dog followed, wagging his tail. He seemed well pleased and contented with his new master. Buddy, he knew, would never tie any tin cans on a dog's tail.

Turning the corner, Buddy was soon in the midst of a number of his boy and girl playmates. It was the first time he had seen some

of them since the last day of school in June.

"Hello! Hello, Buddy!" they called to him. "Whose dog?"

"Mine!"

"What you going to do with him?" asked Harry Clee.

"Keep him."

"In school?"

"I'm going to tie him down in the basement until I come out at noon," Buddy explained. "He's a good dog," and he patted his pet's head.

"He sure is a good dog!" agreed fat Jerry Fleck. "I guess he's the kind they call a hunting dog. Where'd you get him, Buddy?"

There was no time to answer for just then another bell rang, warning the children that unless they hurried in they might be late. So they all ran toward the school yard, Buddy among them, leading his dog by the book strap he had now put gently around the animal's neck as a collar and leash.

Into the school and yard poured several

eager, joyous, laughing streams of boys and girls entering by different gates and doors. Buddy remembered that he had been told first to go to his old room, where Miss Borden had taught him. After assembling there, her former pupils would go to their new room—that is all who had passed and had been promoted, and Buddy was among these lucky ones.

As he hurried into the school, Buddy passed along a corridor, or long hall, to get to Miss Borden's class. He looked in and saw a new, empty room, for an addition had been built on the school during vacation.

“I don't believe there will be any class in that room today,” said Buddy to himself. “I'll leave Brick in there. It will be better than down in the basement. Besides, I haven't time to go down to the basement with my dog.”

Into the new room Buddy hurried. He saw an open closet and quickly led Brick inside. There were some hooks on the wall and to one

of them Buddy fastened the dog strap, carrying his books loose under his arm. Brick whined softly when he found he was going to be left alone.

“Please keep quiet!” said Buddy in a low voice. “I’ll come back and let you out as soon as I can, Brick! Please keep quiet!”

As if the dog understood the need of silence in school, he curled up on the floor of the closet and shut his eyes.

“That’s the way!” said Buddy with a little laugh. “You’re a good dog,” and he shut the closet door. Then Buddy hurried to Miss Borden’s room where he found all his classmates.

There were never many lessons or recitations the first day of the new term, and after some exercises to open the school, and some singing, Mr. Pardin, the principal, gave a little talk in which he said he was glad to see all his boys and girls again.

“And now, children,” said Miss Borden to Buddy and the others when the morning exer-

cises in the assembly hall were finished, "you are going to leave me and go to Miss Thatcher's room. She will be your teacher from now on. I have told her what good boys and girls you are and how well you study. I am sure you will like Miss Thatcher and that she will like you. Ready now! March!"

Buddy and the others marched out into the hall, just as children from various other rooms were doing. One of the older girls, from an upper class, a sort of monitor, led them into the new part of the school and, to Buddy's surprise, into the very room where he had tied Brick, his dog!

"Oh, gee!" whispered Buddy to himself as he looked at the closet. "I hope nothing happens! But— Oh, gee!"

"Just sit down anywhere for the present, children," said Miss Thatcher, coming in to take charge of her new class. "Later on I will decide which desks you are to have for the term."

Buddy slid into the nearest seat, never tak-

ing his eyes off the closet door. For a moment there was quite a little noise and confusion of shuffling feet. Then the room grew very quiet. Miss Thatcher looked at the faces of the boys and girls in front of her. She seemed to pick out Buddy.

“Instead of a lesson this morning,” said Miss Thatcher smiling down from her chair on the platform, “I will let you take turns telling about your adventures during vacation. I will begin with you,” and she pointed at Buddy. “I’ll have to ask your names,” she said, “for I don’t know you, yet, as well as Miss Borden did. Now then,” and she nodded at Buddy. “You may begin. But first what is your name?”

“Buddy—I mean Richard Martyne,” he answered.

“And did you have fun this vacation?” Miss Thatcher asked.

“Oh, I had a fine time!” exclaimed Buddy, never taking his eyes off that closet door. If only Brick would keep still! “I went to my

grandfather's farm and I raised a prize pumpkin and——”

Suddenly there was a queer noise in the room. It began as a soft little whine and, a moment later, turned into the loud howl of a sad and lonesome dog who wanted to be let out and join his master.

Brick, in the closet, hearing Buddy's voice, was now howling and barking as loudly as he could.

“Oh! What is that? My goodness!” exclaimed Miss Thatcher. “What is that?”

CHAPTER IV

BUDDY AND BRICK

SOME of the boys and girls in Buddy's class were smiling. A few laughed a little and all of them looked toward the closet door. As for Buddy, he did not know what to do or say. He never thought his hidden dog would bark right out loud in school.

Miss Thatcher did not have to wonder, very long, what kind of an animal it was that was making all that noise. She knew a dog's bark when she heard it. And now, besides barking and whining, Brick was scratching on the inside of the closet door. He wanted to get out.

"A dog!" exclaimed the teacher. "Whose dog is it? Who put a dog in our closet?"

For a moment the boys and girls looked at one another and then Buddy slowly rose at his desk and, swinging around, said:

"That's my dog, please, Miss Thatcher."

"Your dog?" The teacher was much surprised. "Why, Dick—Buddy—you shouldn't bring your dog to school! Don't you know that was a wrong thing to do? I don't like such tricks!"

"Oh, please Miss Thatcher!" exclaimed Buddy, speaking fast now. "It wasn't a trick! I didn't think there would be any class in this room and I just left my dog in that closet until I could take him home at noon. I didn't think he'd bark."

"But why did you bring your dog to school with you, Buddy?" asked the teacher. "Or perhaps he followed you. In that case it wasn't your fault. I've often heard of dogs following their masters that way."

"Oh, I brought him with me," Buddy made haste to say. He was willing to take all the blame. "But I didn't have time to go back home with my dog after I found him. That's why I put him in the closet."

All this time, as Buddy's voice was heard,

Brick kept whining, barking and scratching on the inside of the closet door. He was making a great racket now and with that, and the laughter of the boys and girls, there was little studying being done in Miss Thatcher's room.

"Was your dog lost and did you find him on your way to school?" asked Miss Thatcher.

"No, I just got my dog a little while ago," said Buddy. "I took him away from a boy who was going to tie a tin can on his tail—a Gypsy boy—I knocked him over and he chased me, and——"

"My, Buddy! You had quite an adventure," interrupted Miss Thatcher, and she smiled, which made Buddy feel better. "Suppose you tell us a story about that instead of your prize pumpkin."

"All right," said Buddy. He was no longer worried. He was sure the teacher loved dogs as he did.

"But first," went on Miss Thatcher, "we had better let Fido out of the closet. He is making too much noise."

"His name is Brick, not Fido," explained Buddy, "'cause he's got red hair—just like mine," and he ran his fingers through his own carrot locks. Buddy wasn't ashamed of his red hair. "And I guess maybe I'd better let him out of the closet," Buddy went on as he saw his teacher going toward the door. "He knows me."

"Perhaps you had better let him out, then," agreed Miss Thatcher. "Though dogs get to know me very soon," she added. "I like them, but I can't say that I want them in my classroom," and again she smiled at Buddy.

"I won't bring Brick to school any more," promised the little lad as he left his seat and opened the closet door. There was a wild burst of happy barks and a rush of feet, but Brick, the shaggy, red dog, could not get out of the closet because he was held back by Buddy's book strap around his neck.

"Down, Brick! Down!" Buddy ordered as the dog tried to stand on his hind legs and run his wet, red tongue over his master's face.

"Down! Keep quiet! Be a good dog!"

With a glad whimper Brick grew quiet and then Buddy loosened the strap from the hook and led his dog out into the room.

"Oh, isn't he nice!" murmured Agnes Fleck.

"That's a fine dog!" said Harry Clee.

"I wish I had him!" added Charlie Taylor.

The children seemed to forget they were in school and talked right out in class. Nor did Miss Thatcher stop them. It was the first day, and not often was a dog found in a closet. So she let the boys and girls speak as they pleased.

"There's my dog!" said Buddy proudly as he led Brick up to the teacher's platform.

"And a very fine animal he seems to be," said Miss Thatcher. "Only he hasn't been well taken care of, Buddy."

"No, I guess he was a sort of tramp dog before I took him away from that Gypsy who was going to tie a can on his tail," said Buddy. Miss Thatcher was rubbing Brick's ears and

the dog, after sniffing at her once or twice seemed to be as friendly with her as he was with Buddy. "I guess he's hungry," said Buddy.

"I think so, myself," agreed Miss Thatcher. "Well, suppose you tell us a little about how you found him and then you may take your dog home, Buddy."

"Oh, may I? Before recess?"

"Yes. It is quite a little time, yet, until recess, and we must begin our lessons soon. I'm afraid there would not be much studying done with a dog in school," and she laughed a little.

Then Buddy laughed and so did the boys and girls and Brick, knowing he was among friends, wagged his tail which had in it more tick seeds and burrs from the burdock plant than a good dog should have. But Buddy would soon attend to that.

"Stand up here by my desk, Buddy, and tell us all about how you found Brick," said Miss Thatcher, and Buddy did. At first he

was a little nervous but it was no worse than "speaking a piece," and he had often done that. So he told how he had started for school and how he had kicked the can and how, finally, he had pushed the Gypsy boy over and hurried away with Brick, to hide him, at last, in the closet of the empty room.

"You did just right, Buddy, to stop that boy from harming the dog," said Miss Thatcher when Buddy had finished the story. "And I am sure you and Brick will become great friends. I only hope you can keep him."

"Why, do you think that Gypsy will come and take Brick away from me?" asked Buddy, taking a tighter hold of the dog's strap.

"No, that Gypsy doesn't seem to own the dog," said the teacher. "But he must belong to some one and if they come for him, Buddy, you would have to give Brick back."

"Oh, yes, I s'pose so—but maybe they won't come," he added and he hoped, with all his heart, that they wouldn't. "I want to keep Brick forever!" he said.

"He seems like a very good dog," said the teacher. "But I think he has been in school long enough," she added with another laugh. "So you may now be excused, Buddy, and take him home. Then come back and we will get our class work started."

"Thank you," said Buddy and as he left the room, leading Brick, more than one boy murmured to himself:

"Gee, I wish I was Buddy!"

Through the streets the red-haired and blue-eyed boy led his dog. He looked around now and then to make sure the Gypsy lad was not sneaking up on him, but there was no sight of that wandering fellow.

"We'll soon be home, Brick," said Buddy to his pet. "Then you'll have something to eat and after school we'll have packs of fun! Oh, boy! I'm glad I got a dog!"

Buddy jumped up in the air and clicked his heels twice and Brick wagged his tail gladly. In a short time Buddy was safely at his house. He hurried with Brick around to the back

door for the dog's feet were a little muddy and Buddy knew better than to take a dog with muddy feet in the front way.

"Hey, Lola!" called Buddy as he reached the back door. "Whoo-oo!"

"What's the matter?" asked the maid. "Why, it's Buddy!" she exclaimed as she caught sight of him. "And with a dog!" she added. "Of all things!"

"He's my dog!" said Buddy proudly.

"Why aren't you in school?" asked Lola. "And what do you mean—your dog?"

"'Cause I had to come out to bring my dog home. Hey, Lola, give me something to eat for Brick, will you? He's awful hungry!"

"He looks it!" chuckled the maid. "I can count his ribs!"

As she was turning back into the kitchen for some scraps of meat Mrs. Martyne, hearing the talk, came to the back steps.

"Why, Buddy!" she exclaimed. "Whatever are you doing out of school and with a dog? Where did you get that dog?"

“He’s my dog!” said Buddy. “I took him away from a Gypsy and I’m going to keep him—can’t I?” he asked.

“Keep a Gypsy dog? No, certainly not!” exclaimed Mrs. Martyne. “Make him go away, Buddy and then hurry back to school! Keep a Gypsy dog? Certainly not!”

CHAPTER V

LOCKED IN

BUDDY'S tanned face changed so quickly, from a happy, laughing one to a sad one, when his mother said that he couldn't keep Brick, that Mrs. Martyne was surprised.

"Why, Buddy!" she exclaimed. "You don't *really* want to keep that dog; do you?"

"*Sure* I do!" said the little boy and he was very much in earnest. "I took him away from a Gypsy and I took him to school and——"

"Buddy! You didn't take a *Gypsy boy* to school!" exclaimed Mrs. Martyne. "Did you?"

"No, I mean I took *Brick*, and——"

"Well, the *idea!* Taking *bricks* to school!" cried Mrs. Martyne. "Buddy, I'm *surprised!*"

"Oh, Mother, you've got it all wrong!"

cried Buddy, almost laughing now. "*Brick* is the name of my *dog*."

"It sounds like a puzzle," said Buddy's mother, sitting down on the top step. "Suppose you tell me all about it."

Which Buddy did while Brick hungrily ate the table scraps which Lola tossed out to him.

"So that's how I got my dog," finished Buddy as he told how Miss Thatcher had sent him out of school to take his pet home. "Can't I keep him? I've always wanted a dog."

"Yes, I know you have, Buddy, and some day you may have one. But you don't want to take a Gypsy's dog; do you?"

"That Gypsy doesn't own Brick!" said the red-haired boy eagerly. "This dog has been lost almost a week. Mr. Cutter, our butcher, has seen him around the alley a lot of times. Brick isn't anybody's dog so I'm going to keep him for mine. Please, Mother, may I?"

Mrs. Martyne found it hard to refuse. She loved Buddy and wanted to make him happy

and she was also fond of animals. The more she looked at this stray dog the better he seemed. And as he ate, his ribs did not seem to show so plainly through his thin skin. He appeared to be getting fat as he ate.

"Please may I keep him?" asked Buddy again. "He's a fine dog!"

"But he must belong to *someone*, Buddy," his mother said. "You wouldn't want to keep a dog that wasn't yours."

"No," agreed the little fellow. "And I wouldn't want anybody to keep *my* dog, if he was lost. But couldn't I keep Brick until the one who owns him comes to get him?"

Mrs. Martyne thought for a moment. She saw how anxious Buddy was and how kindly he patted the dog's head. She could not disappoint him. So she said:

"All right, Buddy. You may keep Stone until some one comes for him."

"His name is *Brick* not *Stone*!" laughed Buddy. "And I don't believe anybody will ever come for him. He's going to be mine!"

"We'll see," said Mrs. Martyne. "But you had better go back to school now."

"I will, Mother!" Buddy's voice was glad and eager. "But will you watch Brick while I'm gone and not let him run away or let anybody take him?"

"Yes, I'll watch him," promised Mrs. Martyne. "Run along to school."

"I'll get him a drink, first," said the red-haired lad. "He must be thirsty."

And Brick was, as could easily be told by the way he lapped up water from the pan which Buddy filled. Then, with a final pat on the head of his pet, Buddy made a sort of collar of the book strap, and to this he tied a piece of clothes line which Lola gave him. Next he found a box in the garage and, putting this in a shady place in the yard, he tied Brick, by the rope leash, to a near-by tree.

"That box will be your kennel until I can make you a better one," said Buddy. "And I'll be back as soon as I can, Brick!"

With anxious eyes the reddish-brown dog

watched his little master leave the yard. Then, with a bark of good-bye, Brick curled up inside the box and went to sleep. He was happy now. He had a new home, a new master and he had been fed and watered. What more could a dog want?

Buddy was happy as he hurried back to school. Miss Thatcher smiled as he entered the room and the boys looked at Buddy as if they hoped he would tell about taking his dog home. But school is for lessons and Miss Thatcher now had her class pretty well in order, with the boys and girls in their regular seats and study was about to begin.

“This will be your seat, Buddy,” said Miss Thatcher pointing to one near a window. Buddy was glad he could look out. For he thought perhaps his dog might happen to come wandering along the street by the school and, if Brick did, Buddy would see him. But the morning passed and nothing happened.

You may be sure Buddy did not spend much time in the school yard when noon came

and the pupils were allowed to go home to their lunch. Down the street Buddy ran as fast as he could move his legs.

"Hey, wait a minute!" cried fat Jerry Fleck.

"Can't wait!" Buddy answered, without turning around. "I want to see if my dog is all right!"

He ran nearly all the way home, reaching there quite out of breath, and almost slipped as he swung around the corner of the house, so anxious was he.

"Brick! Brick!" called Buddy before he was within sight of the box kennel. "Hey, Brick!"

A loud bark was his answer and then he knew his pet was waiting for him. A moment later Buddy was down beside his dog, rubbing his ears, patting his head and gently pulling a few burdock burrs from his tail.

"Good old Brick!" murmured Buddy. "My dog! Good old Brick."

A noise at the fence startled him. He looked

up, quickly, thinking perhaps it might be that Gypsy lad again, or some one to claim the lost dog. But it was only fat Jerry Fleck, Tom Gordon and Harry Clee. They had followed Buddy home to see the dog.

“Is he all right?” asked Harry.

“Sure!” answered Buddy. “Come on in. I won’t let him bite.”

“He doesn’t look very fierce!” chuckled Tom.

“If he wants to do any biting,” spoke Harry, “let him take Jerry. Jerry’s so fat he wouldn’t mind being bitten by a dog.”

“Oh, is that so?” cried Jerry. “Well I guess I would!”

“Brick won’t bite!” declared Buddy. “Will you, old fellow?”

The dog seemed about to wag his tail off with happiness when Buddy petted him, and he made friends at once with Tom, Jerry and Harry as they scrambled over the fence.

For a time the four boys stood around the box kennel, talking about Brick, looking him

over and trying to guess what kind of a dog he might be.

"He's a hunting dog, I tell you!" said Harry. "My uncle had one so I ought to know."

"What does he hunt?" asked Jerry. "Wild animals?"

"Hunting dogs are mostly for birds, like wild ducks," explained Harry. "You can always tell a hunting dog."

"How?" Buddy wanted to know.

"Just show 'em a gun. If they get all excited like, and bark and run around that shows they're a hunting dog."

"Gee! If we only had a gun!" murmured Tom. "Then we could tell."

"I don't care if he's a hunting dog or not, I like him!" said Buddy. "He's all mine!"

"Sure! He's a fine dog!" agreed his chums.

Then Mrs. Martyne sent Lola to call Buddy in to lunch and this made the other boys remember that they had to go home, eat and

run back to school. So Buddy, with a final pat on his shaggy pet's head, went in to wash his hands and face and eat a hurried meal. Then he skipped out to the yard again and played with Brick until it was time to go back to his class.

"Don't let anybody take Brick, Mother!" was Buddy's last call as he ran around the corner.

"All right," she answered. "I'll watch him."

She wasn't sure Mr. Martyne would let Buddy keep the dog, but when Buddy's father came home, early that afternoon, before the red-haired boy was out of school, and when he had heard the story, Mr. Martyne laughed and said:

"Oh, let him keep the dog until some one comes to claim it. Maybe no one will."

"If they did I'm afraid it would break Buddy's heart," said his mother softly. "He just loves that dog and the dog loves Buddy."

In the days that followed Buddy made a

good kennel for his pet, with the help of Harry and the other boys. He also got a strong chain leash for the dog who was to be kept tied in the yard for about a week. After that, Mr. Martyne said, there would be no danger of Brick wandering away.

But, all the while, Buddy was worried lest the dog's rightful owner might find out where he was living and come to get him.

"If he does, of course I'll give Brick back," said Buddy. "But I hope it doesn't happen."

And it didn't—at least in the next two weeks. During that time Buddy and Brick became fast friends and every moment when he was out of school Buddy spent with his pet. Brick went everywhere Buddy went, following the red-haired boy and his chums all over Mountchester. Buddy would not go to the store without taking Brick along. And when Buddy rolled along on his new rubber-wheeled skates Brick raced by his side.

"Buddy and his dog are great chums," said

Mrs. Martyne to her husband one night after the little boy had gone to bed, having paid a last visit, out in the dark, to see that Brick was asleep in his kennel.

“Yes,” said Mr. Martyne. “I certainly hope nothing happens to take Brick away from Buddy.”

It was two or three days after this that something rather strange happened. Buddy had stayed in after school to clean off the blackboards for Miss Thatcher, which task was taken in turn by different boys. Today it was Buddy's work.

This afternoon there were many boards to clean and it took Buddy longer than usual so that it was quite late when he had finished and was ready to go home.

He walked down the long hall, out of his class room, and to the big front doors of the school, expecting to find them unlocked as he had before.

But something had gone wrong. The principal and all the teachers had left the school

and so had the janitor, Mr. Austin. And, when he left, the janitor had locked all the doors, not knowing Buddy was up in his room cleaning the blackboards.

“Well,” said Buddy to himself as he tried the front doors and found they would not open, “they’re locked. I’ll go out the back way.”

But the back door was also locked, and so was a side door, which was seldom used. Buddy went from one door to the other, his heart beginning to beat fast. It was getting dark.

He was alone in the school—locked in.

CHAPTER VI

BRICK TO THE RESCUE

BUDDY is late," said Mrs. Martyne to Lola, as the afternoon passed.

"Yes'm, he is a bit," agreed the girl as she put into the oven a chocolate cake which she had just finished. "But he'll be along pretty soon now. He told me, when he went back this noon, he had to stay in and clean the blackboards."

"Oh, then it's all right," said Mrs. Martyne as she passed on through the kitchen.

"And would you look at Brick!" went on the maid with a laugh, pointing out of the window into the yard where the dog's kennel had been placed. "Seems like he knew it was time Buddy came home."

"Yes," Mrs. Martyne answered, "I've noticed that when it comes time for Buddy to

reach home Brick seems to know it and he gets restless. Brick is a smart dog.”

“Indeed that’s what he is,” said Lola. “And Buddy is a smart little boy. They make a good pair.”

True enough it was that Brick seemed to be restless. He had been quietly sleeping in his kennel most of the afternoon, for the day was hot, even for late September. But now the dog was running up and down as far as his chain would let him, and sometimes he strained on the leather collar that had replaced the book strap which Buddy once put about his pet’s neck.

“Sure it’s Buddy you’re wanting ; isn’t it ?” said Lola, calling to Brick out of an open window as she closed the oven door. “And, as he’ll soon be along, I guess I’d better let you loose so you can go meet him.”

She had done this once or twice before so that Brick had learned the way Buddy came from school and, with wild, joyous barks and frantic waggings of his tail, he had, several

times, dashed down the street to meet his little master.

But Lola had a few things to do yet in the kitchen so it was not until half an hour later, during which time Brick was getting more and more eager and restless to be loosed, that the girl went out and took off his chain.

“There you are now, Brick! Go meet Buddy!” said Lola. “He’s late—quite late,” she added as she remembered the time. “I hope nothing has happened to him.”

Brick gave a bark, paused to take a drink of fresh water which Lola brought to him and then dashed out of the yard. He ran to the end of the street, at the corner of which he nearly always saw his young master, with his red hair and blue eyes, coming from school. Not more than once or twice had Brick gone as far as the second corner to find Buddy. He seemed to know just when to start to meet Buddy at the corner.

But this afternoon there was no blue-eyed and red-haired boy running to meet his dog.

Brick sniffed the air, for dogs know their masters more by smell than by sight. And Brick did not smell Buddy coming. Still he might be just around the next corner.

Brick, who had become quite a fine looking dog since he had been well fed and cared for by Buddy, looked up and down the street. He had learned that it was dangerous to cross without looking both ways to see if any autos were coming. Once Brick had nearly been run over and another time the wheels of a car fairly bumped him out of the way. But this was before Brick was Buddy's dog.

So, watching his chance, when traffic had slowed up a bit, Brick dashed across the street and on down to the next corner where he hoped to meet his young master.

But, all this while, Buddy was locked in the school. At first, after he had tried the big front doors, and found them tightly closed, Buddy had not been in the least frightened. And even when he had run to the back door and then to the side, and had found both of

them locked, he wasn't afraid. Not at all.

"I'll get out, somehow," he said to himself.

He remembered the time he was lost in the corn, when he discovered the big pumpkin that, later, won him a prize at the County Fair. And he remembered when he had fallen down in the dry well. It seemed, then, that he never would get out. But he had been rescued.

"And I'll get out now!" said Buddy to himself. "Maybe there's a window open down in the basement that I can crawl out of."

More than once, during school hours, Buddy had been sent to the basement of the school with a message to Mr. Austin, the janitor. So he knew his way about very well, and soon he was down in the cellar of Clover School. It was getting dark down here now, though the sun had only just set. However, basements and cellars are nearly always dark and dim. But Buddy wasn't afraid. He looked at the piles of coal in the bin, at the sacks of waste paper gathered during the day and at the big heating boilers which would be started, when

cold weather came, to send warm steam hissing into the different rooms.

“I’ll try some of these windows,” said Buddy to himself. “One of ’em ought to be unfastened. I’ve got to get a box to stand on, though.”

The basement windows were rather high from the floor but Buddy knew where Mr. Austin kept odds and ends in the basement. And on top of a pile of wood he found a box he could stand up on. He dragged this under one window and climbed up. But he was much disappointed when he found that the window was nailed shut. He would need a hammer to get it open and, even with a hammer, it would be hard work.

“I’ll try another,” said Buddy.

But the second window was nailed shut and also the third. Buddy did not know it, but with the start of the fall term Mr. Austin always nailed most of his basement windows shut. He used to say he didn’t want stray cats and dogs in the school cellar.

"I guess the coal-bin windows won't be nailed," Buddy suddenly thought. "They have to leave them open to put in more coal. I'll climb over the coal and get out one of those windows."

It would be dirty work, he knew, crawling over the coal, but it could not be helped. He didn't want to stay locked in all night. Though he supposed, when he didn't come home to supper, that his father and mother would miss him and they might come to the school to look for him.

"I told Lola I was going to stay in to clean the blackboards," said the blue-eyed boy to himself as he went to the coal bin. "Maybe she'll remember about it."

He had another bit of bad luck, however, as he crawled over the coal, getting his hands quite black in doing so. For the windows of the bin were also fastened, though on the outside, with padlocks and Mr. Austin had the key.

"No getting out that way!" said Buddy as

he crawled back. "Oh, but maybe the outside basement door is open!" he told himself with a happy feeling. Why didn't I think of that before?"

He went to a wash room in the cellar and scrubbed some of the coal dirt off his hands. It was getting quite dark down there now and he hurried through the different rooms to the back door, feeling more anxious.

But alas! That, too, was locked!

"Oh, dear!" sighed Buddy. "What am I going to do?"

He thought of several things. He might find the long, dangling rope and ring the school bell. That would sound an alarm and the firemen or police might come, knowing that something was wrong when the school bell rang at an hour when there was no school.

"But I don't like to make such a fuss!" said Buddy to himself. "If I can't get out before it gets real dark I'll ring the bell. But maybe there's another way. I s'pose I could break a window glass and crawl out through the hole,

but I might cut myself and I guess Mr. Austin wouldn't like it if I broke a window."

Then Buddy had a new thought.

"I know!" he suddenly exclaimed. "I'll go up and tap on the front doors, near the street. Somebody will see me or hear me and they'll go get Mr. Austin and he'll come and let me out."

Buddy fairly ran to the front hall and took his place by the big front doors. He could now look out into the street, from which the school set back about fifty feet. Many persons were passing up and down, hurrying home from work, and there were many autos in the street.

Buddy tapped with his knife handle on the glass, not hard enough to break the pane, but as loudly as he dared. At the same time he called:

"Let me out! Let me out! I'm locked in!"

If there had not been so many autos, honking their horns with, now and then, one shooting and banging like a gun when it had a backfire, and if the crowds hurrying home

from work had only stopped to listen, they might have heard Buddy's calls. And if the people had not been in such a rush some one in the throng might have seen the small boy.

But no one paid any attention to him and poor Buddy tapped and called and called and tapped with the evening shadows growing darker and longer and no one came to let him out.

Meanwhile Brick did not know what to make of it. It was long past the time when his small master should have been home. Something was wrong. Brick knew it, but what it was he did not know. He decided to go on down to the next corner. But when he had done this, and still there was no Buddy running to meet him, the dog was worried.

Then Brick did a very smart thing. He knew his way to school and he knew that it was in the big, red building that his small master spent most of his time every day but Saturdays and Sundays. So Brick went to school.

Trotting down the street, taking care to

watch for autos at the crossings, on ran the dog to the rescue. He turned up the walk leading to the front doors and what a joyful bark he gave as he saw Buddy standing there, looking out, his nose pressed flat against the glass as it had been pressed against the toy store window when he first saw those wonderful skates.

“Oh, Brick!” cried Buddy in delight when he saw his dog outside. “You’ve come for me; haven’t you? Oh, Brick! My dog!”

Brick barked wildly, joyously and nearly wagged his tail off. He raised up, put his front feet on the glass and began to scratch as though he would tear down the doors. He had come to the rescue but how was he to get the locked-in boy out?

CHAPTER VII

THE NUTTING PARTY

BUDDY no longer felt worried at being a prisoner in the locked school. Now that his dog had come to him, the little boy felt that everything would be all right. He wasn't exactly afraid, even when it began to get quite dark in the big and silent rooms behind him.

"For," he said afterward, "I could have rung the bell when it got real dark. Then somebody would come."

But now Brick was there, just outside the doors and Buddy was happy. The dog, though, was wondering what it was all about. Why didn't his master come out and play with him? Why didn't he open the doors and come out, to go racing down the street. Brick could not understand that the doors were locked.

He stopped scratching and began to bark

again. Now and then he whimpered and whined as if asking Buddy to come out. And Brick never stopped wagging his tail. He was so glad to see Buddy.

Buddy knew, however, that tail-wagging, barking and whining would not get him out of the locked school. So he said to his dog:

“Go get somebody, Brick! Run out to the street and make somebody come close enough so I can tell ’em I’m locked in. Then they’ll go get the janitor and he’ll let me out. Go get somebody to come close here where I can tell ’em about it, Brick. The autos make such a noise that I can’t make ’em hear.”

That was quite a lot of talk for Brick to understand, but the dog put his head on one side, raised one ear a little and drooped the other, as he always did when he was trying to guess what Buddy was saying. Now whether Brick really understood the words of his master I don’t know. But the dog must have guessed what was wanted.

For he suddenly trotted down to the side-

walk, along which many boys, men and women were now passing, and then Brick began to bark loudly. He would do this a little while and then he would run back to see that Buddy was all right. Then he would again trot to the sidewalk and bark louder than ever.

At last a passing man noticed the queer actions of the dog and stopped.

“What’s the matter, old fellow?” the man asked Brick, patting the dog’s head. At once Brick took a gentle hold of the man’s clothes and began to pull him toward the building.

“So you want me to go to school; do you?” asked the man with a laugh. “Well, my lesson days are over. But——”

Then he looked toward the front door and saw Buddy waving his hands and tapping on the glass. This was the first person who had paid any heed to the locked-in boy and this would not have happened except for Brick. Buddy’s shouts and tappings had not been heard because of the noises in the street. But Brick had brought help.

“Oh, ho! So that’s why you want me to go to school! There’s a boy in there!” exclaimed the man. “Smart dog!”

He turned off the street and walked toward the big front doors. Brick was delighted now and dashed ahead, turning excitedly around and around to make sure the man was coming and, at the same time, barking loudly.

“What’s the matter?” asked the man of Buddy, through the glass.

“I’m locked in!” Buddy answered. “I stayed in to clean the blackboards and the janitor forgot about me and locked me in. Please get me out.”

“Well, I haven’t a key that will unlock this door,” said the man, “but I’ll go tell the janitor, if you know where he lives.”

“It’s just down the next street, near the corner,” Buddy said. He knew where Mr. Austin lived and described the house.

“I’ll go get him,” offered the man.

“Oh, thank you!” said Buddy.

“Better thank your smart dog!” chuckled

the man. "If it hadn't been for him I'd never have known you were here. Don't worry now, I'll soon have you out."

As if knowing that everything was soon going to be all right, Brick sat down on the front steps of the school and waited. Now and then he looked up through the glass at Buddy and the small boy waved his hand to his dog. In a short time Mr. Austin came hurrying back with the kind man and the door was opened.

"My goodness, Buddy!" said the janitor. "Locked in! This is too bad!"

"Oh, I don't mind!" Buddy said with a laugh. "If it hadn't happened I wouldn't know what a smart dog I have. I'm much obliged to you, sir," he said to the man.

"Oh, that's all right!" was the answer. "Skip along home now—you and your dog!"

And you may be sure Buddy and Brick ran as fast as they could, for it was quite late now.

"Oh, Buddy! Where ever have you been?" exclaimed his mother as he ran into the house,

followed by his dog. "I was getting worried about you."

"I was locked in," was the reply, and the story was soon told.

Next day, in school, everybody who knew Buddy was talking about his adventure and all the boys said Brick was the best dog they had ever seen. While the girls said he was "sweet" and "cute," and things like that.

One Saturday morning, just as Buddy was dressing, having looked out of an upper window to make sure Brick was in his kennel, Buddy heard a voice calling:

"Hey, Buddy, hurry up!"

"I am up!" answered the blue-eyed boy with a laugh as he looked out of his window and saw Harry Clee in the side yard.

"Well, then, come on down!" shouted Harry.

"What's the matter?" Buddy wanted to know.

"We're going nutting!" was the answer. "I was just over to Tom's house. He's eating

breakfast. I've had mine. You get yours and we'll go to the woods after hickory nuts."

"Oh, goodie!" cried Buddy. "I'll take Brick!"

"Sure, bring your dog!" said Harry. "Hurry now! Come on over to Tom's house when you've had breakfast."

"All right," was the reply and Buddy fairly jumped into his clothes.

"Sure an' what's the rush?" asked Lola as he dashed into the breakfast room a little later. "Is there a fire or are you late for school?"

"There isn't any school on Saturday and I'm glad of it!" said Buddy with a laugh. "I'm going nutting."

"Good for you!" said Lola. "If you bring back enough I'll put some nuts in a cake."

"That'll be fine!" said Buddy.

A little later he was hurrying over to Tom Gordon's house, followed by the eager Brick who liked Saturdays the best of any day in the week. Brick seemed to know when Saturday came, for then he could be with Buddy morn-

ing and afternoon and the two roamed the fields, went to the woods or along the brook, with other boys and had grand times.

“Do you know where we can find any nuts?” asked Buddy of his chums as they crossed the fields back of the school and turned into a patch of woods.

“Sure,” answered Harry. “I know where there are some walnut trees and some hickory nut trees.”

“I hope the squirrels haven’t taken ’em all,” said Tom.

“That’s right,” echoed Buddy. “Well, if we see any squirrels, Brick will bark and drive ’em away and then we can get the nuts.”

“We’ll leave a few for the squirrels, though,” suggested Harry. “Squirrels have to eat same as we do.”

“Oh, sure!” agreed the other boys.

The nut trees were not as easy to find as Harry had thought, and the boys wandered about in the woods that crisp October day for some time without finding any. Buddy said:

“We ought to separate a bit and scatter out. If we all stick together it’s just like one boy looking. If we spread out, like when we’re playing Hare and Hounds, we’ll have better luck. The first fellow that finds a tree can holler and the other two will come where he is.”

This seemed like a good plan and Tom and Harry agreed to it. Then they separated, Buddy going straight ahead with Tom branching off to the left and Harry to the right. Of course Brick stayed with Buddy.

For some time Buddy walked along with his dog looking for a nut tree. He had lost sight of Tom and Harry but could hear them crashing through the underbrush and knew they could not be far away.

“I hope I find the first nuts,” murmured Buddy. “Why can’t you smell a nut tree like you can smell out the place where you have buried a bone, Brick?” he asked his dog.

Brick looked up from where he had thrust his head into a hole in the ground and sneezed,

for some fuzzy dust had gotten up his nose.

“Go on! Find a nut tree!” said Buddy with a laugh.

Brick wagged his tail, as if he understood and started off with Buddy following. The trees were quite thick now and because most of their leaves had fallen it was easy to see a long distance through the woods. Buddy could no longer hear Tom or Harry.

Suddenly as the red-haired boy was tramping along he heard Brick bark sharply. The dog had run on a little way ahead.

“Maybe he’s found a nut tree!” exclaimed Buddy.

A moment later he saw, moving near him, through the woods, half hidden by trees and bushes, a large, brown animal. He could not see it very plainly.

“I wonder what that is?” whispered Buddy.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GYPSY CAMP

TRAMPING through the bushes, crack-
ing sticks under its feet, that big, brown
animal made quite a noise. Buddy heard it.
So did Brick. And Brick barked, but Buddy
kept quiet and got behind a tree from which he
peered out.

“I wasn’t afraid,” he said afterward, “but
I wanted to see if it was a bear or a wolf.”

“Oh, Buddy!” his mother said with a laugh.
“Didn’t you know we have no bears or wolves
in our woods.”

“Oh, I knew they didn’t live there regular,”
Buddy said, “but I thought maybe one might
have gotten loose out of a circus.”

So Buddy remained behind the tree and
peered out while the big, brown animal kept on
going and Brick barked louder and louder. At

last Buddy whistled and called to his dog:

“Come here!”

Brick came running toward his master, quite excited and with his tongue hanging out of his mouth. For it is only in this way that a dog can cool off—by opening his mouth to let his tongue hang out. Brick was quite warm for he never seemed to walk. He was always running.

“What is it, Brick? What’s that animal?” and Buddy pointed to the brown one which was now half hidden behind a clump of bushes.

The dog barked as if saying that he would go see what it was. He had already caught sight of the creature and had heard the tramping noise, which is the reason Brick barked.

“I wish Tom and Harry were here,” murmured Buddy. “They’d like to see what this is. If it’s a bear, out of a circus, maybe we could drive it into a den and roll a stone in front, so it couldn’t get out, and then we’d get a reward. Gee! I wish it was a bear!”

Then he began to look anxiously this way

and that, to his right and left, for a sight of his chums. But Tom and Harry seemed far away.

"I'll find out what that animal is!" decided Buddy, suddenly. "Maybe I can get it into a cave all by myself. I'll have Brick to help." Buddy wasn't at all afraid as long as his dog was with him.

But just as the small boy was about to step out from behind his tree the brown animal gave a loud snort and jumped out from where it was half hidden by the clump of bushes. It was coming straight toward Buddy. Brick barked loudly and then, all of a sudden, Buddy laughed.

For the brown animal was only an old horse wandering through the woods.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Buddy. "A horse! and I thought it was a bear! Ha! Ha! Trot along, horse!"

Brick capered about and barked as though he, too, were laughing at the joke. The horse trotted a little way and then, seeing the boy

and the dog, turned and made off into a deeper part of the woods.

“I wonder whose horse you are?” said Buddy to himself as he walked along. The brown animal was now out of sight. “But I’m not going to try to catch you and take you home like I did the lost cow,” the boy went on. “You might live too far away.”

For the last few minutes he had forgotten all about looking for nut trees. But, now that the horse was gone, it came into Buddy’s mind that he was on a nutting picnic. Tom and Harry would be looking for trees and he must do the same.

So he began roving about in the woods, going a little way in this direction and a little way in that direction, but not a nut tree was to be seen.

Then, all of a sudden, as Buddy came up out of a little glade, or hollow place, he heard a voice calling :

“Buddy! Tom! I’ve found a tree!”

It was Harry. He had the first luck.

“Where are you?” shouted Buddy. “Hi!”

“Over this way!” answered Harry. “I’ll keep on yelling until you can tell where I am.”

“Is Tom with you?” asked Buddy, turning to the right in the direction of his chum’s voice.

“No, I haven’t seen him. Yell and maybe he’ll hear you.”

Buddy gave several loud shouts and pretty soon Tom answered.

“What’s the matter?” he wanted to know.

“Harry’s found a nut tree,” was the reply. “Come on over toward me and then we’ll go where he is.”

“All right,” said Tom.

In a short time the two boys had joined Harry who was standing at the foot of a large hickory nut tree. There were many of the nuts on the ground, an early frost having cracked open the outer bark covering.

“This is dandy!” cried Buddy.

“What packs of nuts!” yelled Tom.

“And there’s a black walnut tree over

there," said Harry, pointing, "and it's got a lot of nuts on. Some are on the ground."

"We'll get all we want!" said Buddy. "Come on, before the squirrels take 'em all."

"I saw some squirrels when I first got here," Harry said, "but they ran away."

"I saw a horse," Buddy said. "First I thought it was a bear and I was going to drive it into a den so we could catch him."

"If you see any bears you'd better keep away!" advised Tom, as he began gathering the nuts.

"Pooh! If it was a bear in these woods it would be a tame one out of a circus, or something," declared Buddy. "They wouldn't hurt you."

"I wouldn't take any chances," said Harry.

"Well, anyhow, it was only a horse," Buddy explained with a laugh.

Then Tom had an idea.

"If it was a lost horse," he said, "maybe we could find out who owned it and get a reward for bringing it back."

"I thought of that," Buddy said, "but we might have to go too far. Anyhow the horse ran away. Let's just gather nuts."

This suited the boys and soon their pockets were well filled. They stopped, now and then, to crack a few of the hickories, but the nuts were too fresh and green to be really good yet. They must dry out and get sweet.

"Let's go get some black walnuts," proposed Tom after a while. "My father likes them."

"So does mine," said Buddy.

Brick was having a fine time in the woods which were filled with all sorts of wonderful smells. A dog has as much fun finding new smells as boys do finding new kinds of candy. And Brick thought it fine to rustle through the dried leaves. He did not go far from the boys, though, and when Buddy called, as they were about to start for the black walnut tree, Brick came running to his master.

"We won't have room for many more nuts," said Tom, looking at his bulging pockets. "And I only brought one empty salt sack."

"That's all I brought," added Harry. "I didn't think we'd find so many nuts."

"I got two salt bags," said Buddy. "If we fill all four bags and our pockets we'll have enough and we can divide 'em up after we get home."

"Sure!" agreed the other boys.

As they walked on toward the next tree they passed a sort of road in the woods along which the trees had been cut down. The road had not been used much, however, for it was overgrown with grass and weeds. But the boys had a good chance to look down it, because the trees were cleared away. And something he saw at the end of the road caused Buddy suddenly to exclaim:

"Look at those red wagons!" He pointed to several, gay with red paint, gold and mirrors that sparkled in the sun.

"It's a circus!" cried Tom. "That's where the horse got loose from. Gee, fellows! It's a circus!"

"No," said Buddy, "that's a Gypsy camp!"

And we've got to be very, very careful."

"Careful? What for?" asked Tom. "Gypsies don't kidnap you."

"I know they don't" said Buddy. "It's Brick I'm thinking of. It was a Gypsy boy, and maybe one from this camp, that tried to tie a tin can on Brick's tail. Fellows, we've got to be careful!"

CHAPTER IX

RINGS IN HIS EARS

GYPSIES were often seen around Mountchester, though it was in summer that these dark, wandering ones were more commonly noticed. Sometimes they would drive their caravan of gay wagons, bright with red and yellow paint, and glittering with mirrors, on through the town. Again they might stop just outside and make a camp there.

Buddy and his friends had often passed these roadside Gypsy camps, where tents were set up among the wagons. One tent was generally that of a Fortune Teller as the Gypsy woman called herself, though of course no one can tell another's fortune. And in front of her tent might be a large sign, like those at the side shows of a circus or a fair. There might be the picture of a big hand, with strange lines

and bright, red pictures on and around it.

Sometimes these Gypsy caravans traveled in autos instead of wagons drawn by horses. But, even then, the autos were painted in bright colors and had many mirrors on the outside.

This was the first time Buddy and his chums had seen a Gypsy camp so far off in the woods or so late in the season. Generally by the time the school summer vacation was over the Gypsies had gone from around Mountchester.

"What you s'pose they're doing in these woods?" asked Harry as he and the other two boys stood in the old forest road and looked down it toward the Gypsy wagons and tents. For two tents could be seen gleaming white among the trees. "What are they here for?"

"They're camping," said Tom.

"Sure, I know that," said the other. "But what for?"

"Maybe they want to get Brick," suggested Buddy.

"Oh, the whole tribe wouldn't stay here in camp just to get one dog!" exclaimed Harry.

"They might. Brick is a very good dog," said his master.

"Sure he is—I know that," Harry agreed. "But if they were after Brick they'd have been sneaking around your house before this to get him."

"Maybe they couldn't find where I lived," Buddy said. "When I took Brick away from that Gypsy boy I went right on to school and Brick went with me. That Gypsy wouldn't know where I lived. I tell you, fellows, we got to be careful! Come here, Brick!" he ordered in a low voice. "Don't you go too far away!"

Brick, wagging his tail, came back from a little excursion into the bush, where he went to find out where a certain, strange wild smell came from.

"Well, we don't have to go near that camp," said Tom, after a while. "We can get the walnuts and go back home. There doesn't seem to be anybody around that camp, anyhow."

"No, I don't see anybody," Buddy said.

"All the same I'd like to go closer and see

how it looks," said Harry. "I always like to see how Gypsies cook and live in those wagons. It must be fun."

"I'd like to travel with 'em," said Buddy. "I mean if they were real, nice Gypsies," he made haste to say as his chums looked at him. "And wouldn't steal my dog."

"I guess Gypsies like dogs and horses," said Tom. "Well, shall we go down closer and look? It wouldn't be any harm to have just a look at their tents and wagons," he went on.

"And we could hold Brick so they couldn't take him away," spoke Harry.

"Huh! I guess Brick wouldn't go with 'em if I told him not to," said Buddy. "But if we go any closer we got to be careful. Here, Brick!" he called to the dog. "I'll put this on you," and Buddy drew a leash from his pocket and snapped one end in a ring on Brick's collar.

Thus leading his dog along, and followed by his two chums, Buddy walked down the road toward the Gypsy camp. As the boys came nearer, they could hear the murmur of voices

and, now and then, the barking of dogs. At the sound of barking Brick lifted his ears and tugged at his leash.

“No you don’t!” said Buddy. “You stay right with me. I don’t want you getting in a fight with those Gypsy dogs.”

A man suddenly burst through the bushes at the side of the old road. He was a man with a face as dark as an Indian’s and he had shiny gold rings in his ears. The boys had often seen Gypsy men with rings in their ears so they were not surprised at this.

“Where you boys going?” asked the man, planting himself in front of the three so they had to stop. He spoke in English, though Buddy and his chums knew he could also speak his own, strange Gypsy talk if he wanted to. “Where you going?” he asked again.

“Oh, just down the road,” said Buddy. “We got a right to be in these woods,” he added. Buddy wasn’t one to be afraid even of a Gypsy man with rings in his ears.

“Sure you got a right!” and the man

laughed showing very white teeth. "Been nutting; haven't you?" he asked.

"We got a few," said Tom.

"We—we were going to have a look at your camp," spoke Harry.

"Oh, going to have your fortunes told?" asked the man with a laugh. "Well, go on, don't let me stop you. We got a good fortune teller in our camp. Tells you what happened in the past, present and future. Got any money?" he asked and his eyes seemed to gleam as he looked from one boy to the other and then at Brick who did not wag his tail in a friendly way as he did at nearly everybody.

"No, we haven't any money," said Buddy. "We came out to gather nuts and we don't have to pay for 'em."

"That's right. The nuts are free!" chuckled the man with the gold rings in his ears. "But if you haven't any money there's no use asking her to tell your fortunes," and he nodded toward the tent with the picture of the big hand.

"Oh, we don't want our fortunes told," said

Buddy. "We just wanted to take a look at the camp."

"Well, looking won't do any harm—go ahead. I'm not stopping you," the man said and he moved to one side of the road. He seemed quite good-natured and friendly. The boys were not afraid.

"I saw a horse wandering in the woods," remarked Buddy. "A brown horse. Maybe he was one of yours."

"He was!" said the Gypsy, quickly. "He strayed away. I'm looking for him. Which way did he go?"

"Over there," and Buddy pointed.

"That's why I'm out in the woods," went on the man with the gold rings. "I'm glad you saw him. That your dog?" he suddenly asked Buddy.

"Yes, sir," was the answer.

Then, suddenly, there was another crackling noise in the bushes. At first the boys thought it was the stray horse but in a moment they saw a tall, slim Gypsy lad push his way out on

the road. Buddy knew him in a moment. He was the Gypsy that Buddy had knocked over as he was trying to tie a can on Brick's tail!

“Ha! I've found you again, I have!” exclaimed the Gypsy lad. “And now I'll get that dog!”

He made a leap toward Buddy and Brick.

CHAPTER X

A QUEER ANIMAL

EVER since Buddy had seen the Gypsy camp and the man with gold rings in his ears, the boy had been on the watch lest something happen to his dog. And now, when it seemed that Brick was to be taken away, Buddy was ready to do something.

“You can’t have this dog!” cried Buddy, putting himself on guard in front of Brick. “He isn’t yours. He’s mine and you aren’t going to tie any can on his tail!”

Brick growled and showed his teeth. He, too, was ready to fight.

“Come on, fellows!” cried Buddy to his chums. “Don’t let him get my dog!”

“We’re with you, Buddy!” exclaimed Tom.

“Sure!” added Harry.

The two sprang to Buddy’s side. And as

he saw the three boys, with the dog between Buddy and Tom, showing his teeth and growling, the Gypsy lad stopped.

Then the Gypsy man, shaking his head so that the gold rings in his ears glistened in the sun, spoke and said:

“What’s all this about?”

“He wants to take my dog,” said Buddy.
“But he shan’t have him!”

Then the Gypsy man spoke to the Gypsy lad but in words Buddy and his chums could not understand. It was mysterious Gypsy talk. The dark-faced lad answered and seemed to be angry. But the man was also angry and at last he took hold of the Gypsy lad’s shoulders, turned him about so that he faced toward the camp and, with a few more queer words, gave him a shove.

“There you are, boys!” said the Gypsy man with a smile that showed his white teeth. And again he shook his head so his ear rings rattled. “I have told Kurdy to go back to camp and let you alone.”

"Then he won't take Brick away from me; will he?" asked Buddy.

"No. It's all a mistake," said the Gypsy man. "Kurdy thought this dog was one he owned a long time before. That's why he wanted him."

"But, even if this dog was his," said Buddy, "he shouldn't have tried to tie a tin can on his tail."

"No," agreed the man, "he shouldn't. I told Kurdy that. But he is a queer lad. I'm his uncle. I can make him mind. He won't bother you any more. I'm sorry."

"Oh, it's all right, as long as he doesn't try to take my dog or tie a can on his tail," said Buddy with a smile. "Thanks, mister."

"You are welcome," was the answer. "Run along now and gather nuts. That is unless you want your fortunes told," and he laughed.

"Not this morning, I guess," said Tom. "We've had good fortune so far, for we found a lot of nuts."

"And we'll find more," said Harry.

"It was good fortune that you didn't let Kurdy take my dog," spoke Buddy.

"He won't bother you any more," said the man with a wave of his hand to the boys.

The Gypsy lad, shuffling his feet through the dried leaves, was walking back toward the tents and the gay wagons. He did not turn around. Brick had stopped growling, seeming to know that there was no more danger.

"Come on, fellows," called Buddy as the Gypsy man struck off into the woods to look for the straying horse. "Let's go get those black walnuts."

And with Brick racing beside them, the three boys went back to their nut hunting. The black walnuts were larger than the hickory nuts and it did not take long to fill the remainder of their pockets and bags. The walnuts grew inside large, dark green shells, which had just begun to open and peel off. And in picking them up the boys noticed that from the outer shells there ran out a brown juice which stained their hands.

"Oh, look!" exclaimed Buddy as he saw the brown stain on his fingers. "I'm just the color of a Gypsy!"

"So am I!" added Harry and, for fun, he rubbed a little of the walnut juice on his face.

"Hey, don't do that!" cried Tom.

"Why not?" Harry wanted to know and he put some more stain on his face while Buddy did the same, also rubbing it all over his hands.

" 'Cause that stain is hard to get off," said Tom, who had been careful not to get much on his hands. Nor had he put any on his face. "My mother told me that years ago, when the Indians used to steal white children, they stained the kids' faces and hands with walnut juice so they'd look like Indians and their own fathers and mothers wouldn't know 'em."

"Honest?" asked Buddy.

"Sure!" cried Tom. "That's what my mother told me."

"Gee! It does make you look like an Indian," said Buddy, as he glanced at his brown-

stained hands. "But I guess I won't put any more on my face."

"Oh, I guess it'll wash off," said Harry.

"No it won't!" declared Tom. "You'll see!"

"I'm going to save some of these walnut shells," decided Harry, "and when we have a school play I'm going to make myself look like an Indian or a Gypsy. Only I'm not going to put holes in my ears for gold rings. I'll tie 'em on with thread."

"Is there going to be another school play?" asked Buddy. "I didn't hear about it."

"I didn't hear much," Harry said. "I only heard our teacher talking with Mr. Pardin, and she asked him when it was going to be and he said just before Christmas."

"Gee! A school play would be fun!" exclaimed Buddy. "I'd like to be in it only I wouldn't want to make my face and hands all brown."

"It'll come off," said Harry again, but he looked at his stained hands rather doubtfully.

Maybe it wouldn't. He had better be careful.

"Maybe you could have your dog in a school play, Buddy," said Tom. "Can he do any tricks?"

"No, I guess not. I haven't taught him any, but I can. It would be fun to be in a play, I think. Last year we had one only none of us were in it. But it was fun to see it," said Buddy.

"I went to see it," Tom said. "A lot of the fellows and girls from the High School classes were in and some of them were dressed up like kings and queens."

"I'd rather be a Gypsy," said Harry.

"I'd like to be a tramp," said Buddy. "Tramps have dogs and I could have Brick and dress up in ragged clothes. It would be swell!"

"I'd like to run an airship," said Tom. "But I guess an airship would be too big to get in the school."

"Anyhow, you don't know how to run one," spoke Harry. "Well, I guess we'll hear more

about this school play after a while. Say, I'm good and brown; how about it?" he asked his chums with a laugh as he held out his hands.

"Gee! I should say you were!" cried Buddy. "You're worse than either of us!"

"You wait!" said Tom with a smile. "It won't be so much fun when you can't get it off!"

"Oh, it'll wash off!" Harry said. "I'll show you when I get to my house."

Having now all the nuts they could carry, the boys turned back toward home. It was nearly noon and they were getting hungry, for they had brought no lunch. In the afternoon they planned to go fishing, though it was rather late for the fish to bite well, Buddy said.

As they walked along through the woods, Brick, who had been taken off the leash, suddenly began to bark very loudly and made a dash through the bushes.

"What's the matter?" called Harry.

“He’s after something!” Buddy shouted.

“Maybe it’s that Gypsy boy, Kurdy,” spoke Tom.

“No, it’s some animal,” said Buddy. “I saw it running along on a low tree branch. “Get it, Brick! Get it!” he ordered.

There was a fresh burst of barks from the excited dog and the three boys ran after him through the woods, tearing their way past brambles and bushes and covering themselves with ticks, and clinging seeds, for now the weeds were getting dry. Many of them had seeds with hooks and stickers which fastened to anything that brushed past them.

On after the barking dog ran the three boys, in and out among the trees, jumping over stones and leaping across little pools of water. They went so fast that they lost some of the nuts out of their pockets.

Suddenly they came to a little open glade and saw Brick running close behind a small, gray animal with a long tail that was carried curled in a curious way over its back.

“It’s a wild cat!” cried Tom. “Look out!”

“No, it’s a coon!” was Harry’s idea.

“I hope it isn’t a skunk!” said Buddy.

“Don’t go too close, Brick!” he warned his dog. “I don’t want you all covered with skunk perfume!”

The boys knew that a skunk did not smell very nice. But Brick paid no heed to his master’s voice. Closer and closer he ran after the strange animal, across the little open place and, a moment later, he seemed to have caught it. For suddenly Brick came to a stop.

Up ran the boys. There lay the small, gray animal stretched out on the grass, quiet and still.

“Oh, he’s killed it!” said Tom, and he spoke sadly.

“I don’t see how he could,” said Buddy. “He didn’t bite it.”

Brick was sniffing in a puzzled way at the quiet gray animal. The eyes were closed, and it really seemed to be dead.

“I wonder what it is?” said Tom.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE PAPER BASKET

STANDING about the quiet, gray animal, the boys looked at it without speaking. Nor did Brick bark. The dog seemed as much puzzled as were the boys over what had happened.

“It’s too bad he killed it,” said Tom, after a while.

“Are you sure it’s dead?” asked Harry.

“Sure!”

“But Brick didn’t bite this animal, whatever it is,” declared Buddy. “I was watching him. He was chasing close to it when, all of a sudden, this animal stopped and fell down and Brick almost stumbled over it. But he didn’t bite it.”

“Well, it must have been scared to death, then,” said Tom. “For it’s dead now.”

"Too bad," said Buddy. "Well, we might as well go on home, I guess. We can't help it."

The boys turned away and Brick, after a last careful sniff at the gray animal that was stretched out in the grass, followed his red-haired master. They had gone a little way, back toward the woods on the path that led home, when Buddy, happening to turn around, gave a shout.

"What's the matter?" asked Harry.

"Look!" and Buddy pointed.

The animal they had thought was dead had got up and was now running toward a tree as fast as it could go. With a loud bark the dog started after it and the boys also ran.

"Well, what do you know about that?" cried Buddy.

"A dead animal coming to life?" asked Harry. "Wow!"

"Maybe it wasn't dead!" said Tom.

"Sure it was!" declared Buddy. "It didn't open its eyes when Brick sniffed at it. Gee!"

By the time Brick and the boys had crossed the little open place the gray animal had nimbly climbed up a tree and was out of sight. The dog capered around the tree trunk, madly barking, but of course could not climb up. And while the boys were wondering what it was all about they heard a loud noise in the bushes back of them and out walked the gold ear ring Gypsy man leading the stray horse.

“What’s the matter, boys?” he asked, smiling at them.

“We just saw a queer animal that died and then came to life and it ran up in that tree,” said Buddy. “My dog chased it.”

“An animal that died and came to life, eh?” chuckled the Gypsy. “Well, boys, there’s only one queer kind that does that, so far as I know.”

“What kind?” asked Harry.

“Possum,” answered the Gypsy. “Opossum is the right name but most folks call it possum. So it fooled you; did it?” He laughed and shook his head, from side to side.

The boys told what had happened, and how, when Brick was chasing the animal across the open place, it seemed suddenly to fall down dead.

“That was because it found it couldn’t get away,” explained the Gypsy, “and it wanted to fool you and your dog. Possums often do that. They aren’t fighters, not having either sharp teeth or claws, so they have to play dead to save themselves. Dogs and other animals that would bite a live possum won’t touch one they think is dead. So this animal has learned how to play that trick.”

“Gee! That’s funny!” exclaimed Buddy. “I never knew an animal to play dead before.”

“Possums always do it when they can’t get away or up in a tree,” the Gypsy said. “I guess this one must have fallen out of a tree, or your dog got after it when it was on the ground. In a tree a possum can easily get away from any dog, but not so easily on the ground. So it ran as far as it could and

then, when it knew it was going to be caught, it stretched out and made believe it was dead."

"It sure fooled us all right!" chuckled Tom. "But I'm glad it got away," he added.

"So am I," said Buddy. "Come on Brick!" he called. "No use barking for that possum."

"No," said the Gypsy. "He won't come down all day, maybe. Well, boys, I found my horse, thanks to you. And if Kurdy bothers you any more about your dog, you let me know," he said to Buddy.

"I will," promised the blue-eyed boy.

Then, having said good-bye to the Gypsy, while Brick gave a last few farewell barks at the possum up the tree, the boys turned and hurried home with their harvest of nuts.

"Oh, my! What hands!" cried Mrs. Martyne when she saw Buddy's brown ones! "And there's some stain on your face, too!"

"Not as much as Harry has on his!" laughed Buddy. "You ought to see him. But

it's only nice, clean, brown walnut juice."

"Walnut juice, yes! But it's the hardest stain to get off you ever saw!" said his mother. "Soap and water won't move it. Go up and wash right away. Maybe you can get a little off while it's fresh."

Buddy scrubbed and scrubbed up in the bathroom, after he had put the nuts down cellar to dry, but very little of the brown color came off. Not even with the alcohol and other things his mother gave him to use, could it be washed away.

"Golly! Harry will look like half a Gypsy for a week!" chuckled Buddy as he thought of the stains on his chum's face. "It isn't so bad on your hands. But Harry put a lot on his cheeks!"

The brown color showed very plainly on the faces and hands of the nut hunters when they went to school Monday. Harry's face was a funny sight and his chums, as well as the girls in his class, laughed at him. But he didn't mind and laughed with them.

"I'm going to be all brown, like a Gypsy, when we have the school play," he said as fat Agnes Fleck poked fun at him.

"Are we going to have a play?" asked Mary Norse. "Teacher hasn't said anything about it."

"Maybe she will today," said Buddy.

The walnut stains on the faces and hands of the three boys did not keep them from studying and they all did well in their lessons. After the morning recitation hour Miss Thatcher asked the boys about their trip after nuts and when Buddy mentioned the queer animal, she got a book from the library and showed the class some pictures of "possums," some with their little ones on their back, clinging to their mother's long tail so they would not fall as she went up into tall trees.

"I wish we could see a live possum," said Mary.

"Maybe we can catch this one when we go after nuts next Saturday," said Buddy. "If we can, we'll bring it to school; may we?"

“Yes,” the teacher answered. “But I think you will not find it easy to catch the possum, even with your dog to help, Buddy.”

That afternoon Miss Thatcher spoke to her class and said:

“There is going to be a school play, or entertainment, just before Christmas. It will be for the benefit of the Red Cross. The boys and girls of the High School will give a play but there will be a chance for you smaller children also to take part. Perhaps not in the play itself, but in singing or reciting. All those who wish to act in the play may remain after class and I will talk to them.”

“Are you going to be in it, Buddy?” whispered Mary, who sat near him.

“I don’t know,” Buddy said. “If I could catch a possum I might.”

“Why don’t you get up an act with your dog?” asked Mary.

“He doesn’t know any tricks yet,” Buddy answered. “And a dog has to do tricks to be in a play. But maybe I can teach him some.”

“We had a dog, once, that could do lots of tricks,” went on Mary. For Miss Thatcher after speaking of the school play, had given the children five minutes to talk about it among themselves before going on with their lessons.

“What tricks could he do?” asked Buddy.

“He could take a stick and hold it like a gun and march around on his hind legs and he would roll over. And if you put a cracker on his nose he would hold it there until you told him to sneeze and then he would sneeze it off and eat it.”

“Those were fine tricks!” said Buddy. “I wish Brick could do even one of them.”

“And our dog would play dead when you told him to,” went on the little girl.

“He must have been like a possum,” spoke Buddy, laughing.

Then Miss Thatcher rang her bell which was a signal for the talking and whispering to stop. Soon the class was in order and they went on with the reading lesson.

It was Buddy's turn to read and he stood up near his desk, in the front of the room, and held his book in one hand. Before he began he happened to look at the waste-paper basket under Miss Thatcher's desk. And, as he looked at it, Buddy saw the basket move a little. There was a rattling and rustling of the papers in it and some of them began to pop out over the edge. The basket swayed from side to side as if about to tumble over but Miss Thatcher did not seem to notice it.

Then Buddy, dropping his book, suddenly cried:

"Oh, there's something alive in the paper basket! Maybe it's that possum!"

Some of the girls screamed and Miss Thatcher got up from her chair very quickly and picked up the blackboard pointer. Then the basket moved some more and several crumpled wads of paper spilled out on the floor.

"Look! Look!" cried Buddy, pointing toward it. "What's in the paper basket?"

CHAPTER XII

BRICK SURPRISES BUDDY

LESSONS were now forgotten. There was almost as much excitement in Miss Thatcher's room as there had been when Buddy shut Brick in the closet and he howled and barked. There was something in the teacher's paper basket—something alive, that was sure—for now it was scrambling around under the wads of paper.

“What is it?” asked Miss Thatcher, holding the long pointer ready in case something should jump out of the basket at her.

“There's something in your basket!” said Buddy who had walked up toward the platform.

“Yes, Buddy, I know that,” said Miss Thatcher. “But what is it?”

“Maybe it's that possum!” said Harry.

“A possum wouldn’t come in school,” said Tom.

“Maybe it’s Buddy’s dog!” suggested Mary Norse, and all eyes were now turned toward the red-haired boy. Miss Thatcher, too, glanced at him as if she thought perhaps Buddy had again played a trick. But Buddy said:

“Oh, no, my dog is too big to get in that basket. Besides, I left him home, tied in his kennel.”

Then Buddy remembered how his dog had once been let loose and how Brick had come to school in search of his lost master. If Brick found his way to school once, might he not do it again?

“But no! Brick is too big to get in that basket!” said Buddy to himself, and this was true enough. Though not a large dog, Brick was a little too big for the basket.

However there was surely some animal among the pieces of waste paper and while the teacher and her pupils were wondering

what it was all of a sudden fat Agnes Fleck jumped out of her seat and cried:

“Oh, it’s a little kitten! See its head!”

And, as Agnes pointed, Miss Thatcher and the children saw a cute, little, maltese kitten lift its head up out of the bundle of papers and cling with its front claws to the edge of the basket.

“Oh, isn’t it sweet!” murmured Mary.

“Oh, I love kittens!”

“Whose is it?” asked Janet Benson.

“How’d it get in there?” Tom Gordon wanted to know.

Miss Thatcher did not look so worried, now that she saw it was only a small kitten among her scrap papers. She laid her blackboard pointer on her desk and stooped down to pick up the little animal, for she loved cats and dogs. But just then the kitten crawled farther out of the basket and, as the paper-holder was not very heavy, the weight of the pussy upset it so that it tumbled over on the side.

“Oh, the poor little thing!” cried Mary.

"It isn't hurt!" said Miss Thatcher with a smile as she picked it up and cuddled the kitten in her arms, rubbing its head and gently scratching its ears. And the pussy was so delighted that she began to purr.

"Oh, isn't she just too sweet for anything!" said fat Agnes. "Is she your pussy, Miss Thatcher?"

"No," answered the teacher. "She is as much of a surprise to me as she is to you children. "How she came to be in my waste basket I don't know. Did any of you boys put this kitten in my basket?" Miss Thatcher asked, looking at Buddy, then at Tom, then at Harry and then at every boy in the room in turn.

"No'm, I didn't," said Buddy.

Every other boy said the same thing and all the girls declared they knew nothing about it.

"Maybe it's the janitor's cat," suggested Buddy.

"Will you go ask Mr. Austin to come here, Buddy," said Miss Thatcher. "Perhaps this

is his cat and he will be looking for her."

"Oh, can't we keep her in this room?" begged Mary. "Please!"

"No," and the teacher smiled. "I like animals as much as you do," she said, "but I am afraid there would be very little studying done if we had pets here. And we seem to be getting more than our share of pets," she went on. "First we had Buddy's dog and now we have this cat."

"They aren't any relation, though," Buddy said. "My dog doesn't know this cat."

"I suppose not," said Miss Thatcher.

"If Brick saw this cat he'd chase her up a tree," chuckled Charlie Taylor.

"No, he wouldn't," said Buddy. "I've taught my dog not to chase cats."

"That's a good boy, Buddy," said Miss Thatcher.

Then Buddy went to call the janitor. But when Mr. Austin came up from the basement he said the kitten wasn't his, nor did he know to whom the pussy belonged.

"I guess she must have come in the school off the street," said the janitor. "She wandered around and then she crawled in your basket and went to sleep there."

"Perhaps," agreed Miss Thatcher. "Well, she certainly gave us all a surprise when she awakened and began crawling about and scattering the papers. Will you please take her down into your basement, Mr. Austin until I go home and then I'll take her with me."

"Oh, is she going to be your cat?" asked Agnes.

"Unless I find that she belongs to some one else," answered Miss Thatcher.

"Will you bring her to school sometimes and let us look at her and play with her?"

"Perhaps," was all the teacher would promise. "But we will soon be busy practicing for the school play to help the Red Cross. I am glad some of you girls are going to take part. I wish some of you boys would," and Miss Thatcher looked straight at Buddy. But he did not answer.

The kitten was taken away by the janitor, purring so happily that she could be heard all over the room. Then the reading lesson went on, Buddy picking up his book that he had dropped when he first saw the basket moving about in such a strange way as the kitten wiggled among the papers.

For two or three days after that nothing much happened in Clover School except the regular lessons. No more kittens were found. Miss Thatcher took "Basket" home with her, for so she had named the little orphan pussy that had wandered into her class.

One day, when Buddy was the last one to leave the room, for he had remained after the others to clean the boards again, Miss Thatcher said to him:

"Aren't you going to be in the school play?"

"Oh, I don't know," he answered. "I can't do anything."

"Why, you once recited very nicely."

"Oh, I don't call that anything," he said.

"I'd like to do something different."

"Such as what, Buddy?" Miss Thatcher inquired.

"Oh, I don't just know," and Buddy looked out of the window. "If I could train my dog to do tricks, maybe I'd like to be in the show with him."

"That would be splendid!" exclaimed Miss Thatcher. "Why don't you do that, Buddy? Teach Brick a few little tricks and I'll make a place for you in the show. Maybe," she added with a laugh, "I could teach Basket, my kitten, to do something."

"I guess cats are hard to train," said Buddy. "And maybe Brick would be, too. But I can try."

"I wish you would, Buddy," his teacher said. "It isn't hard to teach a dog tricks if he isn't too old. And Brick is just a puppy."

"Yes," Buddy agreed. "Well, maybe I will," and he hurried out of school with some new ideas in that red head of his. As he ran along toward home he was thinking more and more how fine it would be if he could get up

on the stage with his dog and make Brick do some tricks like the dogs in a circus.

“Yes, I’ll try!” said Buddy. “It will be fun!”

When he got home he had to go to the store for Lola, and he took Brick with him, of course.

“Brick,” said Buddy, talking to his dog as if the animal could understand, “do you think you could do some tricks for the school play?”

Brick looked up into Buddy’s face and tilted one ear up and the other down, which was a way he had whenever his little master spoke to him.

“We’ll try some when we get home,” went on the red-haired boy.

Having given Lola the sugar and crackers for which she had sent him, Buddy whistled to Brick and they went out in the garage where the boy had set up a sort of “club room,” as he called it. This was a tool closet in which he and his boy chums used to spend an hour or so every day, talking and looking at books. It

was such a small closet that three boys and a dog made a pretty tight fit. But there was plenty of room for Buddy and Brick.

"Let's see now," said Buddy when he had entered with his dog. "The easiest trick is for you to shake hands with me. But you can do that already. Give me your paw, Brick!"

Buddy held out his hand and Brick, who had been taught this trick, which most dogs soon learn, at once held out his paw.

"That's too easy," said Buddy. "You've got to do harder tricks than that to be in a school play for the Red Cross. I wonder if you could walk on your hind legs?"

Buddy had once read that the way to teach a dog to do this trick was to stand him up in a corner so there was no danger of the animal toppling over and becoming frightened. It is hard to teach a frightened animal to do even the simplest trick.

So Buddy backed Brick into a corner, lifted him up by his front paws and gently pressed down on his back so Brick would "sit up."

And at once the dog did this. He seemed to know just what was wanted, and remained upright, holding his front paws limp and opening his mouth to let his tongue hang out.

“Hurray!” cried Buddy. You can do that trick, too! But of course that isn’t very hard. Now if you could only walk out of that corner on your hind legs, and hold a make believe gun like a soldier dog, that would be a fine trick and maybe you and I could do it on the stage. Let’s see, now, here’s a stick that will do for a practice gun.”

Buddy picked up part of a broom handle and pressed it under one of Brick’s front paws.

“Hold it now!” cried the little boy, backing away and leaving Brick still standing upright in the corner. “Hold it now. Forward, march!”

He hardly believed Brick would do anything more than drop the stick and run out on his four paws. But, to Buddy’s great surprise, his dog suddenly began to walk out of the club

room on his hind legs and in one front paw he held the broomstick gun!

“Why! Why!” cried the surprised Buddy. “You can do a fine trick! I never knew it! You must be a trick dog, Brick! I wonder who taught you that? Can you do other tricks? This is great! Now you and I can be in the school play. Hurray!”

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE PET SHOP

AFTER watching Brick, for a few seconds, parade around on his hind legs like a soldier, carrying a broom stick for a gun, Buddy called to his dog:

“That’s enough now! I don’t want you to get too tired!”

As if Brick understood what was said to him, he let go of the stick dropped down on all four paws and, looking up at his master, wagged his tail happily.

“You’re a good dog!” cried Buddy, patting his pet’s head and Brick’s tail wagged faster than before. “You can do two tricks,” went on the red-haired boy. “You can shake hands and walk like a soldier. I wonder if it was just an accident, or if you can do it again?”

To try his pet Buddy held out his hand

and waiting until his dog grew quiet, said:

“Shake!”

At once Brick held out his paw.

“Now for the other trick,” said Buddy. “Here you go, Brick! Be a soldier! Carry your gun!”

Brick gave a little bark, though whether he was glad or sorry he had to do this trick I cannot say. However he did not seem to mind very much for he at once got up on his hind legs and, when Buddy put the piece of broom stick under one front paw, Brick held it there and marched around as he had done before.

“That’s fine!” cried Buddy. “I’m going to tell the fellows.”

He hurried from the garage followed by Brick, who capered about joyfully as if he were a boy just let out of school. Buddy found Tom leaving his house to look for him.

“Hey, Tom, what do you think?” cried Buddy. “Something’s happened!”

“Has the school burned down so we don’t have to go any more?” asked the other boy.

“No,” Buddy answered. “Why, don’t you like to go to school? I do.”

“So do I, sometimes,” sighed Tom. “But my mother has heard about the school play and she says I ought to speak a piece in it. Gosh! I hate to do that. So I wouldn’t much care, now, if the school had burned down, if nobody got hurt, and then I wouldn’t have to speak a piece in the play. Well, I’ve got to do it, I suppose ” Tom did not seem very happy about it.

“That’s what I came over to tell you,” went on Buddy. “About the school play. I’m going to put Brick in.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean so Brick can do tricks.”

“Tricks?” cried Tom. “Your dog can’t do any tricks!”

“Sure he can!” cried Buddy. “I just found it out. He can shake paws and march like a soldier with a gun.”

“Aw, he cannot!”

“Sure he can! I’ll show you! Here Brick!”

The dog, who had run down to the end of Tom's yard to sniff in a fence corner, now came running back to his master.

"Here, Brick!" went on Buddy. "Shake paws with Tom!"

The dog at once did as he was told and put his paw in the hand of Tom, who was much surprised.

"How'd you teach him that?" he asked Buddy. "It's great!"

"I didn't teach him. I just thought maybe he could do it and I tried him and Brick did it. But that isn't all. Look!"

Buddy found a stick and, holding it up in front of his pet, said:

"Be a soldier now! March!"

Then Brick also did that trick and Tom was more surprised than before.

"Gosh!" he cried. "Brick sure is smart! Who taught him to do that?"

"I don't know," Buddy answered. "Maybe it was whoever had him before I got him."

"Do you mean that Gypsy?" asked Tom.

“No,” answered the red-haired boy, “for that Gypsy just picked Brick up in the street and was only going to tie a can on his tail. He never had my dog long enough to teach him any tricks.”

“I guess he’s a valuable dog,” said Tom patting Brick’s shaggy head. “I wish I had a dog like that. I should think whoever owned him would want to keep him.”

“So would I,” Buddy answered. “But I guess Brick got lost, or maybe he ran away and I found him. Nobody ever advertised for him in the paper, because I kept watch for a week after I got him. My father said I should. But nobody around here lost Brick or they would have advertised for him. Anybody would feel sorry losing a dog like him, wouldn’t they?”

“Sure!” agreed Tom. “Maybe he jumped out of an auto when he was riding through Mountchester, with his folks that lived a long way off, and maybe that’s why they didn’t advertise for him, ’cause they didn’t know where

they lost him or where to look for him.”

“Maybe,” agreed Buddy. “Anyhow Brick is my dog now and I’m going to teach him a lot more tricks and then he can be in the show at school, and help make money for the Red Cross.”

“That’ll be fine!” Tom said. “I’d rather be a dog and do tricks in a school play than have to speak a piece.”

“Oh, it isn’t so bad,” Buddy said.

“Yes, but *you* don’t have to do it!” mournfully remarked Tom. “You can just tell your *dog* to do tricks. Oh, say, Buddy, I got a swell idea!” he suddenly cried.

“What is it?”

“Why couldn’t you and Harry and me all be in a sort of play with your dog? I mean in the school play. Then I wouldn’t have to speak a piece all by myself. I hate that!”

“How could you and Harry and me be in a play with my dog?” asked Buddy.

“Well, sort of like we saw in the movies the other night. You know there were three boys

and they dressed up in old clothes and made believe they were tramps and they found a dog and made it do tricks and there was a blind man who had lost his dog and the fellows made their dog take the blind man's cup and collect pennies like the lost dog used to do."

"But we don't know any blind man," Buddy objected.

Tom said that was so but he added perhaps he and Buddy and Harry could get up some other kind of play for three boys and a dog that did tricks, leaving out the blind man, and Buddy began to think it was a fine idea.

"We'll go see Harry about it," he said.

Harry was as surprised as Tom was to learn that Brick could do two tricks and he liked, very much, Tom's plan of the three chums doing an act with the dog.

"We'll tell Miss Thatcher about it tomorrow," said Harry.

When the teacher heard about the plan of the boys she said it was a very good one.

"I'll write out a little play for you to act,"

she promised. "I'll give Brick a good part. But he ought to do more than two tricks."

"Oh, I'll teach him a lot more!" said Buddy eagerly. "If a dog knows some tricks he can learn more. I'll go see Mr. Hack, the animal man. He'll know the best way to teach a dog."

Sam Hack kept a pet store in Mountchester, selling dogs, cats, parrots and canary birds. That afternoon, when school was out, Buddy and his chums went to Mr. Hack's store.

They looked in the show window for a moment, watching some wire-haired fox terriers playing and when Brick caught sight of them he raised up on his hind legs and put his nose against the glass.

"I guess he'd like to be in there with them," said Tom.

"Yes," agreed Buddy. "Well, let's go in."

As they opened the door of the pet shop Mr. Hack came running out of a back room. He seemed much excited and cried:

"Quick, boys! Close the door! Don't let him get away! Quick! Shut the door!"

CHAPTER XIV

BRICK RUNS AWAY

NONE of the boys quite knew what to make of Mr. Hack. They had never seen him as excited as he now was. He ran toward them from the back room where he had a sort of work shop, waving his hands and shouting:

“Don’t hold it open! Shut it!”

And Harry, who was the last of the three to enter the pet store, was quick enough to close the front door. Then Mr. Hack said:

“Good! You were just in time! I was afraid he’d get out!”

“Do you mean my dog?” asked Buddy who, with Brick, was now in the middle of the store which was quite noisy, for dogs were barking, birds were singing, in the back room a rooster crowed and suddenly a strange voice cried:

“Here I come! Here I come! Let me out!”

"No you don't, Tambo!" exclaimed Mr. Hack and as he spoke a large, green bird, with red feathers in his tail, sailed over the heads of the boys, yelling:

"I want to get out! I want some ice cream! Let me out!"

"Not this time, Tambo!" chuckled Mr. Hack. "You can't get out now!"

"Why, it's a parrot!" exclaimed Buddy as the green bird flew close to the front door, and, finding it shut, circled back and perched on Mr. Hack's shoulder.

"Of course it's a parrot!" said the animal man. "And my best one, too. If he had flown out I don't know how I would have gotten him back. That's why I yelled to you to close the door. Tambo got out of his cage in the back room when I was down cellar and I came up in time to see him working his way to the front here. Then I heard the door open and I knew he'd sail out if it wasn't closed in a hurry. That's why I yelled to you."

"I thought maybe you meant my dog would

run away if we held the door open; but he won't," spoke Buddy.

"Oh, is that your dog?" asked Mr. Hack, looking at Brick.

Buddy said it was.

"Too bad!" exclaimed the animal man, as if in sorrow. "Too bad!"

"Why?" asked Buddy.

"Because," Mr. Hack answered, smiling now, "because, if you have a dog you won't want to buy one of me and I can't make any money selling you one. But maybe each of these lads wants a dog," he added hopefully as he looked at Tom and Harry. But they shook their heads. Not that they wouldn't have been glad to get a dog for a pet, but neither Mrs. Gordon nor Mrs. Clee liked animals around the house. So Harry and Tom could not have one. However Buddy's dog was part theirs, they thought.

"Well, if you don't want a dog, why not buy a cat, or a canary bird, or a chicken or a white rat or even a turtle!" urged the pet shop

keeper. "I've all sorts of animals," he added with a smile as he stroked the feathers of the green parrot who now seemed to have given up the idea of getting out of doors. "Plenty of 'em. Come on, boys, buy a white rat, anyhow!"

"We didn't come to buy any pets," said Buddy, patting his dog's head. "I came to see if you would tell me how to teach Brick some more tricks so he and us fellows can be in a school play."

"Oh, that's the idea; is it?" asked Mr. Hack. "Well, let me see, now! Let me see!"

And at once Tambo began to yell:

"Tea! Tea! Give me a cup of tea! Polly wants a cracker! And tea! Tea! Cracker! Bow-wow!" The green and red bird suddenly began to bark like a dog, which started Brick going and all the other dogs in the shop also, until the boys could not hear each other speak there was such a racket.

They laughed at the noise, which grew louder and louder as the birds began to sing to

keep up with the dogs and a rooster crowed and another parrot in the back room, who could not yet talk very much, shrieked at the top of his voice.

“Whew!” exclaimed Buddy, still laughing, as the noise gradually grew less. “This is a great place!”

“Dandy!” agreed Tom.

“I’d like to live here forever,” decided Harry.

“I’m glad you like animals,” said Mr. Hack. “And now let me see what I can do for you. But first I’d better put Tambo back in his cage so customers can come in my front door without any danger of my parrot flying out.”

“Let me out! Let me out!” cried the green bird, catching the word from his master. “Polly wants ice cream! And some tea! And a cracker! Out! Out! Let Polly out!”

“Not today!” laughed Mr. Hack scratching the bird’s head, which Tambo seemed to like. “I’ll put you back in your cage. It’s queer,”

he said, "but I never can get this parrot to call himself anything but Polly. He never uses his own name. I suppose that's because when he was young everybody called him Polly. I named him Tambo but he never uses it himself."

When the parrot was safe in his cage, crunching sunflower seeds with his strong beak and thick, black tongue, Mr. Hack joined the boys again and listened to Buddy's story of how he had found Brick and how he had discovered that the dog knew how to do two tricks.

"Yes," said the animal man when Brick had shaken paws with him and had marched about like a soldier, "I think he is a smart dog. He may know more tricks than these and if we were sure what they were we might get him to do them. But it will be easy to teach him a few more, such as walking on his front paws, turning a somersault, playing dead and climbing up a little ladder."

"Can he do all those?" asked Buddy.

“Surely! They are easy tricks for almost any dog. I’ll help you, for I’d like to do something for Clover School and the Red Cross. I’ll show you how to teach Brick a number of clever tricks.”

Buddy and his friends were delighted with this and the dog’s education began then and there. Mr. Hack told Buddy what to do to have his pet practice a little each day.

“Don’t let him get too tired, though,” warned the animal man. “A dog can get as tired as a boy. You must be kind and patient with him.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t hurt Brick for anything!”

Among the other dogs in Mr. Hack’s shop was a trick animal he was keeping for a man who went about the country showing his dog in theatres. And when Brick had made himself acquainted with Blanco, which was the other dog’s name, Mr. Hack put him through some of his tricks. Blanco could turn half a dozen somersaults, backward or forward, one after the other, and very quickly.

“Now I’ll tell you what we’ll do,” said the pet shop man when he had showed the boys how Blanco could do tricks. “We’ll let your dog and this one, Buddy, sort of get acquainted. Then when Brick sees Blanco doing a trick he’ll want to imitate him.”

“Oh, that’ll be fine!” exclaimed Buddy.

“But you must be patient,” warned Mr. Hack. “It takes a dog a few days to learn even a simple trick so he can do it well.”

So Brick’s education began that day with the trick of pretending he was “dead.” Blanco could do this, stretching out until he looked like that queer possum the boys had found in the woods. Then, when Mr. Hack called: “Fire!” up Blanco would jump as lively as a cricket.

But the first time Buddy made Brick lie down like that the dog got right up again as soon as his little master moved away from him.

“Lie still! Play dead!” Buddy ordered.
“Down, Brick!”

But Brick only wagged his tail happily and

everybody knows that even a pretend dead dog can't wag his tail. Or at least he should not.

"That's one trick he doesn't know," said Mr. Hack. "But soft and easy does it! He'll learn after a while."

And in a few days, during which Buddy took Brick to the pet shop as often as he could, Brick learned to lie quiet when his master called sharply: "Dead dog!" And then, when Buddy shouted "Fire!" up Brick would jump as lively as Blanco had done.

In this way, taking one trick at a time, Brick learned in a few weeks to walk on his front legs, to turn somersaults both ways and to climb up a little ladder.

"He'll make a big hit in the school play!" cried Buddy in delight.

"Sure!" said Harry. "He's a wonderful dog!"

"We'd better tell Miss Thatcher about it now," suggested Tom, "so she can make up that little act we are to be in."

And when the teacher learned what Buddy

could make Brick do in the way of tricks she said :

“That will be just fine for the school play. You three boys and the dog will have the stage to yourselves part of the time.”

What with lessons to study, fun to have before and after school, and practice to do on the little act, or sketch, that Miss Thatcher had arranged for the three chums and Brick, our Buddy boy was a very busy little chap those days. He and Brick had fine times together and the dog did not seem to mind the many minutes he had to spend in learning tricks.

One day when Lola went out in the yard where Brick was chained to the side of his kennel, the girl saw the dog running about so excitedly, jumping up and down and barking so loudly that she knew it was time for Buddy to come home from school. Brick also knew it.

“I’ll let you out and you can go meet Buddy,” said Lola as she took the chain off Brick’s collar. With a joyous bark the dog ran off down the street and Lola went in.

It was, perhaps, half an hour later that Buddy came running into the yard.

“Where’s Brick?” he asked as he saw the empty kennel.

“Why, didn’t he come to meet you?” asked Lola, from the kitchen. “I let him loose quite a while ago as I often do. Didn’t he meet you?”

“No,” answered Buddy and he had a queer feeling around his heart. “I didn’t see Brick at all!”

“Well, the last I saw of him he was running down the street,” said Lola. “He was going to meet you.”

“But he didn’t meet me,” said Buddy. “My dog has run away! Oh, dear!”

CHAPTER XV

THE MIDNIGHT BELL

LOLA hurried out into the yard. Mrs. Martyne, hearing what Buddy had said, also came down from her room. Buddy was running around the house and out to the garage, looking in all sorts of places where, sometimes, he had known Brick to hide. Then he looked up and down the street. No dog was in sight.

“Oh, he’s gone! He’s gone!” murmured Buddy and tears came into his eyes. “My dog has run away and he’s lost!”

“Now don’t worry,” Mrs. Martyne advised. “Brick can’t be lost. He just ran to meet you and perhaps he met some other dogs—maybe that trick one in the pet store you told us about.”

“Oh, no!” declared Buddy. “That’s

Blanco! The man who owns him took him away to show in theatres last week. Brick couldn't have met Blanco. He's lost, I tell you! I'll never see my dog again!"

"Don't be a baby!" said Mrs. Martyne, seeing tears in Buddy's eyes.

"Well—well—you didn't love Brick as I did," Buddy answered.

"I know you were very fond of him," said Buddy's mother. "But I'm sure he isn't lost. He often went to meet you coming home from school. Lola thought he would do the same now."

"But he didn't," said Buddy.

"I'm so sorry!" spoke Lola. "It's my fault!"

"No," answered Buddy who did not want her to be blamed. "It wasn't anybody's fault. But I guess that Gypsy saw Brick and picked him up. Oh, I hope he doesn't tie any cans on his tail!"

"He won't do that!" Mrs. Martyne said. "And I don't believe Brick was taken by any

one. I think he just missed his way, or, perhaps, he went down a wrong street and, after a while, he'll come back here."

"Do you really think so?" asked Buddy.

His mother said that she really believed this, and comforted the little fellow as best she could. Lola did, too, and said she would go out and look for Brick up and down the street.

"That's what I'll do," decided Buddy, with a sudden thought. "I'll get Tom and Harry and we'll all look for my dog."

Buddy's two chums were much surprised, and very sorry, to learn about Brick running off down the street and not finding his little master or coming back to his kennel. Both Tom and Harry were sure the Gypsy had picked up Brick, but they did not say so to Buddy, not wanting to make their chum feel any sadder.

"We'll look all around for him," said Harry.

"Sure!" said Tom. "We'll find him."

Then began a search up one street and down another, with the boys stopping in different stores where Buddy often took his dog. But the trick animal was not to be found and as the day passed, and night began to come on, Buddy felt very unhappy.

"Maybe we'd better tell the police," suggested Tom when it started to get dark and they hadn't yet found Brick.

"Sure! That's right!" agreed Harry.

"I don't believe the police can find him, but we'll ask them," said Buddy. "Gee! I never thought I'd lose Brick!"

The boys knew Policeman Dorsey, who was stationed in their neighborhood, and soon they were telling him the story as he stood under a street lamp swinging his club.

"I'll have my eyes open for that dog," the officer promised. "Leave it to me, boys!"

"And if you find him, please telephone me, no matter what time of night it is," begged Buddy.

"I will!" promised Policeman Dorsey.

Mr. Martyne came home from his law office and listened with sorrow to Buddy's story of what had happened. He asked many questions and had Lola tell, over again, how excited Brick was when it came near time for Buddy to be home from school and how she had let the dog out of the yard.

"Which way did he run when he got out into the street?" asked the lawyer.

"Toward the school," Lola answered.

"And did you come home from school as you always do, Buddy?" his father wanted to know.

"Yes, Daddy," was the answer and then Buddy suddenly remembered something and exclaimed; "Oh, no I didn't, either! I was coming past Mrs. Batton's house and she asked me to go to the store for her and she gave me a nickel. And I went down a different street and I came home by a different street. I remember now!"

"Then that's what made the trouble," said Mr. Martyne. "You see Brick was in the

habit of meeting you along a certain street and when you didn't come that way, Buddy, he missed you."

"Oh, maybe he did!" Buddy exclaimed, new hope coming into his heart. "But what did Brick do then?"

"I don't know," Mr. Martyne answered. "But once he missed you, he probably didn't know just what to do, so he wandered about the streets looking for you and maybe he is away over on the other side of town now, still looking. Dogs can easily get lost once they go down a wrong street or lose sight of their master."

"Then what had we better do to find Brick?" Buddy wanted to know.

"There isn't much more you can do until tomorrow," said his father. "Brick may come back himself, for dogs are pretty smart at finding their way to their kennels after having been lost. He may roam about quite a bit before that, however. But I hardly believe anyone will take him. Especially not that

Gypsy lad. He would be afraid to pick Brick up on the street. Brick is no longer a frightened puppy. He is well grown and knows how to look after himself."

"Tomorrow I'll tell more policemen to watch for him," said Buddy, "and I'll go on the other side of town and look for him myself. Tom and Harry will go with me. Oh, maybe that's Brick now!" he cried eagerly as he heard a noise out in the yard. It was now quite dark.

Anxiously Buddy rushed to the kennel and looked around the back and front porches. But there was no joyful bark of his dog. The noise must have been made by the wind.

Buddy did not feel much like eating supper that evening. Between the few bites he took he was listening for the return of his dog. But no Brick came. Mr. Martyne telephoned to Police Headquarters, told about the lost dog and asked if anything had been heard of him. But there was no news.

"You had better go to bed, Buddy," his

mother said, after a while. "You're sleepy."

"Will you wake me up as soon as Brick comes home?" Buddy asked.

"Yes," his father promised.

"Even if it's real late—after twelve o'clock?" the boy asked.

"Yes, even if it's midnight."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Buddy for perhaps the tenth time since Brick had run away. "It's too bad! We had him all trained to do tricks for the school play and now he can't be in it!"

"I'm sure you'll find him!" said Mrs. Martyne.

So Buddy went to bed and, after a while, his parents came upstairs and the house was in darkness. In spite of his sorrow, Buddy managed to fall asleep.

How long he had been in bed he did not know, but he was suddenly awakened by the loud ringing of a bell. It sounded very strange in the silence of the night. In the next room Buddy heard his mother ask:

"Did you hear that noise? What is it?"

“The school bell is ringing,” Mr. Martyne answered. “The bell on Clover School. We can always hear it plainly when the wind blows as it is blowing now. It’s the school bell!”

“But why would Buddy’s school bell be ringing at midnight?” asked Mrs. Martyne.

“Maybe the school is on fire,” her husband answered.

At that Buddy suddenly sat up in bed wide awake. For a moment he almost forgot about poor, lost Brick. His school on fire! Oh!

CHAPTER XVI

BRICK'S NAUGHTY TRICK

THERE was no use trying to go to sleep now. What Buddy had heard—the ringing of the midnight bell, and what his father said—had driven sleep from his eyes. Besides he now heard his father and mother moving about in the next room and he knew something must be the matter or they would not be up at this hour.

“Look out the window and see if you can see a glare of red in the sky,” Mrs. Martyne told her husband. “If you can it’s a fire.”

“No, I can’t see any red light,” Buddy’s father reported a moment later. “But the bell is still ringing.”

“It rings in a funny way,” said Mrs. Martyne. “It isn’t the way it would be rung if the school was on fire. Do you think so?”

"No," agreed her husband. "It isn't being rung hard enough."

Then his parents heard Buddy moving around in his room and his mother called:

"Are you awake?"

"Yes, Mother," he answered. "May I go down with Daddy and see our school on fire?"

"Oh, you heard that; did you?" chuckled Mr. Martyne who was putting on his shoes. "Well, I don't believe the school is on fire but there must be something the matter or the bell wouldn't be ringing. Yes, come along if you like."

"Oh, Clayton! At this late hour!" objected Mrs. Martyne.

"It isn't so late," her husband answered. "Besides, Buddy is awake. And, now that we are up, we'll have a look for Brick as we go along."

"Oh, maybe he's back in his kennel," said Buddy, hopefully.

"Maybe," said Mr. Marytne. But he thought if the dog had come back he would

have been scratching and whining around the front or back door. Brick would be lonesome for Buddy after having been away since early in the afternoon. No, Mr. Martyne didn't believe Brick had come back but he wasn't going to tell Buddy that.

The bell wasn't ringing so often now, nor so loudly. At times, when the wind died away, it could hardly be heard. But many in Mountchester had listened to the clanging, at least those living near Clover School. So that when Buddy and his father, who had quickly dressed, went down to the street they found many of their neighbors hurrying in the same direction as themselves—toward the school. There was Mr. Gordon and Mr. Clee, and Tom and Harry were with their fathers.

"Did you hear it, too?" asked Buddy of his chums.

"Sure," Tom answered. "First I thought it was the fire bell."

"Maybe some tramps or Gypsies got in our school and they rang the bell," said Harry.

"It would be queer if we should catch that Gypsy boy with my dog," said Buddy.

"Wouldn't it!" cried Tom and Harry.

It did not take long for the wondering throng to hurry to Clover School. As they turned the corner and down the street on which the building stood, they saw it all in darkness. So there was no need to worry about the school being on fire.

"But somebody is in there ringing the bell," said Mr. Clee as, once more, the clanging sound came from the belfry.

"If it's boys or tramps doing it for a joke I'll have 'em arrested! That's what I will!" said Mr. Austin, the janitor who had been among the first to be aroused. He lived very near the school.

It was a good thing the janitor was in the crowd that gathered in front of the building, otherwise they might have had to break a window to get in. But Mr. Austin used one of his keys and opened the big front doors, behind which Buddy had once been a prisoner.

As the crowd of men and boys walked in after the janitor the bell rang again and Mr. Austin called out loudly:

“Whoever is in here better come out and quit ringing that bell before I have ’em arrested! Come on out now!”

There was no answer. All was dark and silent inside the school. The bell no longer rang.

“I wish I had brought my flashlight,” said Buddy. “Then we could go on in and see who it was.”

As the school was seldom used at night, there were lights only in the auditorium on the second floor. There were some lights in the hall but the switch for them was some distance away from the front door.

As Buddy stopped speaking, there was a queer sound from the back hall. Or, rather, there were three sounds.

First there was a scramble of feet, like those of some animal. Then the bell rang—just once. Then came a little bark and, a mo-

ment later, there was a rush of a fuzzy body and a dog leaped upon Buddy in wild joy.

"Oh, it's Brick! It's Brick!" Buddy shouted. "I've got my dog!"

Then some man in the crowd who had a flashlight turned it on and they all saw the lost Brick capering about Buddy, wagging his tail and cutting up all sorts of joyful capers.

"Somebody in here had Brick!" cried Tom.

"Maybe it was that Gypsy!" said Harry. "Hiding in our school with Buddy's dog."

"No, I hardly think anything like that happened," said Mr. Martyne, as the janitor found a switch and turned the lights on in the hall. "I think Brick has been shut up here by himself ever since afternoon and that he has been ringing the bell."

"Could a dog ring the school bell?" asked Mr. Clee.

"Brick did, I'm sure," said Buddy's father. "Isn't the bell rope, in the back hall, low enough for Brick to reach, Mr. Austin?"

"It is if it isn't caught up on the hook in the side wall," was the answer. "Sometimes the rope slips down and almost touches the floor. Brick could easily reach it then."

"Let's go take a look," suggested Mr. Martyne while Buddy held Brick in his arms as if he never wanted to let him go again."

The bell rope was found hanging low down, within easy reach of the dog. And by frayed marks on the rope it was easy to see where Brick had taken hold of it in his teeth and had pulled it to give the midnight alarm.

"He's a smart dog!" said Mr. Austin. "But why did he come to school?"

"I think this is what happened," said Mr. Martyne. "When Brick was let out of our yard to go meet Buddy the dog went down one street but missed him. Buddy came home a different way. Brick ran all the way to school, as he has done before, thinking he would meet Buddy. However he didn't and then Brick must have gone in school and have wandered around looking for Buddy."

"I guess that's how it was," said Mr. Austin. "And I didn't know there was a dog in here and I locked him up when I closed the school for the night."

"That's it," said Mr. Martyne. "Then Brick wandered about in the dark and he accidentally found the bell rope. Maybe he reached up with his paws and knocked it off the hook so he could get hold of it in his teeth. Then he pulled on the rope and of course he rung the bell."

"Do you s'pose he did it on purpose so I'd come and let him out?" asked Buddy.

"Well, Brick is a smart dog," his father answered, "but I hardly think he is smart enough for that. He may have thought he was playing with the rope when he pulled on it. But in that way he rang the bell."

"And it's a good thing he did or I'd never have known where he was," Buddy said with a happy laugh.

So the mystery of the midnight bell and the lost dog were both solved at the same time.

Just what had taken place of course no one knew. For Brick, smart as he was, could not talk. But it seemed natural that he might have been shut up in the school while looking for Buddy. And it did not take much of a pull on the rope to set the bell ringing. Often the janitor let Buddy and the other small boys ring it for him, and Brick was almost as strong as Buddy or his chums.

"Well, I guess we don't need you," said Mr. Martyne to Policeman Dorsey who came along just then, having heard the school bell and wanting to know why it was ringing in the middle of the night.

"And you don't need to look for my lost dog any more, thank you," said Buddy. "'Cause I've found him. He rang the bell!" and the story was soon told.

"Well, well! That's fine! Found your dog!" chuckled the officer. "I'm very glad of that!"

The next day all Buddy's friends were talking about the strange happening of the

night before—the dog who rang the midnight bell—and everyone said Brick was the smartest dog they had ever known.

“Everybody will come to the school play to see him!” said Harry.

“We’ll make a lot of money for Red Cross,” added Tom.

“I hope nothing else happens,” said Buddy as he looked anxiously at Brick.

But something did and it was rather a naughty trick on Brick’s part. At least so Agnes Fleck said and she ought to know.

About a week after the ringing of the school bell, during which time Buddy, Harry and Tom had practiced their parts with Brick for their little act in the school play, Buddy was sent by his mother, early one morning, before school, to take a book to Mrs. Fleck. It was a book about baking cakes and pies and Mrs. Fleck wanted it early. So Buddy had hardly eaten his breakfast before he was on his way over to the home of fat Agnes and Jerry.

“Hello, Buddy!” greeted Jerry, as he

opened the door. "And you have Brick with you!" he added as the dog ran in ahead of his master.

"Yes, I thought I'd take him for a little walk before school," Buddy answered. "Here's the cook book for your mother."

"Oh, thank you, Buddy," said Mrs. Fleck, coming into the hall just then.

Before Buddy could stop him, Brick had run upstairs, for he made himself quite at home in the houses of his master's chums. And a moment later there came a laughing cry from Agnes.

"Stop! Stop it, Brick!" begged Agnes. "Oh, such a naughty trick!" she cried.

"Agnes! Hurry down!" her mother called. "You'll be late for school! Come down at once and eat breakfast. We've all had ours! You are late! Come down!"

"I—I can't come down, Mother!" Agnes said and then she laughed again and cried: "Stop it, Brick! Stop it!"

"What's he doing? Why can't you come

down?" Mrs. Fleck asked. While Buddy called:

"Brick! Come here!"

But Brick appeared to be having fun with something. Buddy and Jerry could hear him growling in a way he always did when he was playing with an old ball that Buddy often tossed for him.

"Oh, you're a naughty dog!" said Agnes again. But she did not seem to be afraid, for she was laughing. "Oh, Brick! Give it here!" she begged.

"Agnes, you stop playing with that dog and come down to your breakfast!" ordered her mother.

"I'm not playing with him!" said the fat girl upstairs.

"Then come down at once!" said Mrs. Fleck again.

"I—I can't—Mother. Brick—Brick—he's got my—" And then Agnes went off in another peal of jolly laughter.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EMPTY KENNEL

BUDDY and Jerry, standing at the foot of the stairs with Mrs. Fleck, wondered at the laughter of Agnes and at the growling of Brick. Then the fat girl's mother called sharply:

"Agnes if you don't quit fooling I'll come up there! What's the matter, anyhow?"

"Maybe Brick is biting her toes!" suggested Jerry.

"Brick won't bite any one he knows," Buddy said.

"Well, I meant maybe he's making believe bite," went on Jerry, laughing.

But at that moment the dog came running downstairs dragging something in his mouth and Agnes appeared at the top of the stairs in her bare feet, shouting between laughs:

"There he goes with my stockings! Make him bring them back!"

"Good land!" exclaimed Mrs. Fleck. "Was that why you couldn't come down, Agnes?"

"Yes, it was," answered the fat girl, while her brother laughed heartily. "Brick got hold of my stockings and dragged them all around the room. And when I got one stocking away from him and put it on and chased after him to get the other he took hold of the one on my leg and pulled that off! Oh, such a dog!" But she, too, had to laugh.

"Such nonsense!" said Mrs. Fleck with a smile.

"Here, Brick! Drop that!" ordered Buddy and his dog obeyed at once, letting the stockings—for he now had both—fall on the floor.

"Here they are, Agnes!" said Buddy, making a ball of them and tossing them up to the fat girl. "Now you get out, Brick!"

"Oh, don't hurt him!" begged Agnes. "It was a naughty trick but he didn't mean it."

"I won't hurt him," said Buddy. "But I

guess I'd better get him out of here or maybe he'll try to drag out the piano," and he laughed as he ruffled his dog's ears. Then Brick, whose tail had drooped between his legs at his master's somewhat harsh words, became joyful again.

"Come on, Buddy!" called Jerry. "We'll go to school."

"I'll have to stop at my house and chain Brick in his kennel," said the red-haired boy. "If I don't he'll follow me to class."

"Yes," agreed the fat boy, "I guess he would. Good-bye, Mother!" he called as he ran out after Buddy and Brick.

"Good-bye!" echoed Mrs. Fleck. "And you'd better hurry, Agnes, or you'll be late for school."

"If I am it will be Brick's fault for running away with my stockings," and Agnes laughed as she went back in her room to finish dressing. However, by hurrying, she wasn't late.

That afternoon, when lessons had been

nearly finished, Miss Thatcher said to her class:

“Those of you who are to take part in the school play will please remain, after dismissal, for practice.”

Buddy, Tom and Harry looked at one another. Miss Thatcher seemed to know what was in Buddy’s mind for she went on:

“You may go home now and get your dog, Buddy, for, since Brick is in the play, he will need to practice with you boys. This will be one of the last few rehearsals before the play next week. You may go now, Buddy.”

“Gee! I wish I was going to be in the school play!” thought Sam Wilson. “Look at Buddy getting out early and going home after his dog. Next time there’s a school play I’m going to get some kind of an animal and be in it myself.”

Buddy hurried home where he found Brick anxiously waiting for him. It had been decided, on account of the danger of Brick getting lost if he was allowed to go meet Buddy,

that, hereafter, the dog would be kept chained in his kennel until his master came home.

“Those Gypsies are camped out there in the woods yet,” said Buddy, when the new plan was talked over. “And that big boy might get him if Brick comes to meet me. So let him stay home until I come.”

And now Brick was joyfully capering about as Buddy loosed his chain and soon the two hurried back to school for the practice. Buddy found many other boys and girls of the different classes in the big assembly hall when he went in with Tom and Harry. At first Brick was a little puzzled over being with such a crowd of noisy, laughing, shouting and talking boys and girls. Some of the High School pupils were already going through their parts and two boys, who were supposed to be Roman soldiers, were pretending to have a fight with wooden swords. Brick barked at them until Buddy made him keep quiet.

The school play was in several parts.

There were three acts in which the older pupils had parts but the little sketch which Miss Thatcher had written for Buddy and his chums was the best that was to be given by the children of the lower grades. At last it came the turn of Buddy and his chums to go on the stage and practice with Brick.

“Now you boys remember that you are to pretend you are three, jolly little rag-a-muffins who are tramping about the country,” explained Miss Thatcher to the small boys with Brick in their midst. “Tom and Harry come on the stage first and then they discover Buddy and Brick asleep under a bush. Brick wakes up and barks and then Buddy wakes up and he joins you other two boys. Then you talk among yourselves and say that you will go about the country giving a little performance with Brick, the trick dog.”

“And then do I make Brick do his tricks?” asked Buddy.

“Yes,” his teacher said, “then the fun begins. I hope it will prove successful.”

"We have a new trick you didn't see yet," Buddy went on.

"What is it?" asked Miss Thatcher.

"At the end," Buddy answered, "after Brick plays he is dead and then he comes to life when I yell 'Fire!' we three fellows stoop down as if we were playing leap-frog and Brick jumps over all our backs."

"That's a good trick—if he will do it," said Mr. Pardin, the principal who was helping the teachers with the practice.

"Oh, Brick will do it all right," declared Buddy.

"All ready then, begin!" called Miss Thatcher.

"But we haven't got our ragged clothes on," objected Harry. For it had been decided that the three boys would wear their oldest and most ragged suits for the play, to pretend they were little tramps. And to make it look more real, they had torn extra holes in some old suits and then had sewed on flapping patches of many queer colors.

“Just make believe you have your old suits on,” said the teacher.

So the practice began and it went very well. Brick was a clever dog and Buddy and his chums had trained him carefully, so that he went through all his tricks without making a mistake.

“If he does as well as that a week from Saturday, it will be fine!” said Miss Thatcher when the practice was over.

“Oh, he will!” declared Buddy.

“I only hope we three fellows do as good as Brick,” Tom murmured.

“You will if you don’t think too much about it,” his teacher said. “Whatever you do, don’t get stage fright. Just see how cool Brick was, even with all this crowd looking at him,” and she motioned to the other boys and girls most of whom had remained to see the rehearsal of the younger pupils. “All Brick thinks about is what he has to do,” went on Miss Thatcher. “He doesn’t care about the audience. You boys must do the same.”

“Well, I’ll try,” said Tom, but he looked worried.

“Aw, we’ll make out all right!” said Harry.

“Sure!” echoed Buddy.

The school play was to be given twice, the first performance on Saturday afternoon and the second that same evening. Only a week remained, now, before the time and all those who were to take part were getting a little anxious. Beginning with the next Monday, there was practice several afternoons when classes were dismissed and Buddy, his chums and Brick did very well. The close of that act, where Brick leaped over the backs of the three chums, made all the other pupils clap loudly when they saw it.

“It’s quite a hit!” said Miss Thatcher to the principal.

“Yes, indeed,” he agreed. “Buddy and his dog are very clever.”

To make Brick also look like a tramp it had been decided to have him wear a little ragged suit, and a hat. Buddy got the idea from

seeing a dog wearing a hat going about the street as an advertising stunt.

At first Brick did not take kindly to the coat, trousers and hat that he had to wear. But at last he got accustomed to them, though he was always glad when they were taken off and he could run about as he pleased, with only his own shaggy hair as a garment.

A last practice was held on the Friday afternoon before the play was to be given on Saturday. Buddy, his chums and Brick had done well and came out of school, rather late but very happy.

As they turned down the street to go to their homes, Tom gave a sudden pull on Buddy's coat and in a low voice asked:

"Did you see him?"

"Who?" Buddy asked.

"That Gypsy fellow—the one we met in the woods—the one who wanted to tie a can on Brick's tail. Did you see him?"

"No," answered Buddy, his heart beating fast, "I didn't. Where is he?" He peered

eagerly forward, but it was getting dark now, for winter was coming and the days were short.

"He was right on that corner," said Tom. "He dodged out of sight when he saw us."

"Well, if he ran away I guess it's all right," spoke Buddy. "Anyhow I'll keep good watch over Brick. And maybe it was somebody else you saw, Tom."

"No, it was that Gypsy, I'm sure!"

"He won't dare do anything if we three keep together," said Harry. "And, anyhow, we could call a policeman."

"Sure!" said Tom.

They looked carefully about as they reached the corner, but no Gypsy was in sight. However Tom and Harry decided to walk home with Buddy and Brick, though it was a little out of their way.

"We don't want anything to happen just before the school play," spoke Harry.

"That's right!" echoed his chums.

Buddy made sure, that night, about snap-

ping Brick's chain on his collar and seeing that the other end of the rattling, iron leash was attached to the kennel.

"You might just happen to get loose and wander out in the street, Brick," said Buddy to his dog as he patted him good night. "And if you did, and if that Gypsy is sneaking around, he might pick you up and keep you for his dog. I wouldn't want that."

So, having made sure about the safety of his pet, Buddy went in the house to tear a few more holes in the play-suit he was to wear next day, and sew a few more patches on.

"My! You surely will look like the worst rag-a-muffin in the world!" laughed his mother.

"That's what I want!" chuckled Buddy.

Before he went to bed he looked out of the upper window and in the moonlight saw Brick sitting out in front of the kennel. Buddy raised the sash and called:

"Good night, Brick!"

The dog looked up, saw his master and

wagged a tail in greeting. Then he barked softly and crawled in his kennel to curl up and go to sleep.

Buddy was down early next morning, for he and his chums had decided to hold a little practice of their own before going to the school.

“Hi Brick! This is the day!” yelled Buddy, running to the kennel.

But, even as he drew near, he guessed that something was wrong. For the chain was stretched outside the dog house, but there was no dog on the end of it. Brick was gone. The kennel was empty!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SEARCH

BUDDY, for a few moments, could not believe that Brick was gone. There was the kennel, there was the chain, there was the dish from which the dog lapped his water. But there was no Brick inside or outside the kennel. Buddy looked carefully, even putting his head within the dark little house. Then he called loudly:

“Brick! Brick!”

“What’s the matter?” asked Buddy’s mother, as she looked out of the kitchen door, having come down to tell Lola something about lunch.

“Brick is gone!” said Buddy and he could not keep a choking sob out of his voice.

“Gone?” asked Mrs. Martyne. “Gone!”

“Yes He isn’t here. Brick is gone!”

"Maybe he broke his chain and is just running out in the street," said Buddy's mother, hopefully.

Buddy picked up the chain and looked at it.

"No," he said, "it isn't broken. The snap and everything is all right. Somebody unhooked it from Brick's collar and took him away in the night."

"Oh, no, Buddy!" exclaimed his mother. "No!"

"But look! He's gone!"

"Maybe Tom or Harry came over early, before you were up, and just borrowed Brick to practice with him."

Buddy shook his head and answered:

"No, they wouldn't take my dog without telling me."

And, thinking it over, Mrs. Martyne said Buddy was right. Tom or Harry would have been sure to call to Buddy if they had come in to get his dog which they looked upon as almost as much their's as Buddy's.

Then Buddy's mother examined the chain.

It wasn't broken so it was plain that the snap had been unhooked from the dog's collar.

"Maybe Brick loosened it himself," said Mrs. Martyne after a while during which time she and Buddy had looked up and down the street and around the yard for a sight of the missing dog. But he wasn't to be seen.

"No," Buddy said as he, too, once more examined the chain, "Brick couldn't get it loose. Daddy bought this chain new from Mr. Hack, the pet store man, and he said it was a strong snap and no dog could get it loose by himself. Somebody did it."

"It looks so," agreed Mrs. Martyne. "It's too bad," she added as she saw how sad Buddy was.

"But what are we going to do about the school play?" the red-haired boy suddenly asked. "Brick has to be in the act with Tom and Harry and me. And Brick isn't here! The play starts this afternoon. But how can we be in it without Brick? He's the best part of our act—with his tricks."

"It is quite too bad!" said Mrs. Martyne again. "I wonder——"

"Excuse me, Mother," said Buddy as he interrupted her, "but I got to go look for Brick. I'll get Tom and Harry and we'll all look for him. I think I know who has my dog."

"Who, Buddy?"

"That Gypsy fellow! I'm going to his camp and make him give back my dog!" Buddy's blue eyes flashed as he said this.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed his mother. "You can't do that alone. You had better get a policeman, or let me telephone your father. I'll call him up at his office. He went down early this morning."

"No, thank you!" said Buddy. "I can't wait until you telephone Daddy. I want to go to that Gypsy camp right away and get my dog. Tom and Harry will go with me. There's a man there—with gold rings in his ears—he said if that Kurdy ever took my dog again to come to the camp and he'd make

Kurdy give Brick back to me. He will, too!"

"But it would be better to take your father or a policeman with you," Mrs. Martyne said. "I know there is really no danger in the Gypsy camp but I hardly like to let you three little boys go there."

"We're not so little!" declared Buddy, straightening up to make himself as tall as possible.

"I'll go with you myself," offered Mrs. Martyne. "Just wait a minute, Buddy!" She turned to go in the house.

"Oh Mother! I don't want to wait!" cried Buddy. "Those Gypsies may pack up and go away, now they have Brick. Maybe they're gone now! I think that Kurdy came in the night and got my dog when I was asleep. Maybe they're miles away by this time."

"If anyone came in the night and took Brick don't you think your dog would have barked?" asked Buddy's mother.

"He was afraid of that Gypsy who wanted to tie a can on his tail," Buddy answered.

“That’s why Brick didn’t bark. He was afraid!”

“Maybe so,” Mrs. Martyne agreed. “Well, wait a minute, Buddy and I’ll go to that Gypsy camp with you.”

“I wouldn’t be afraid to go alone,” said the boy for he felt that the smiling Gypsy man would be on his side.

However it might be well to take his mother along and Buddy fully intended to do so but while he was waiting for her to get ready, and while he was walking about the yard and past the vacant kennel, wondering where Brick was, he suddenly heard a boy calling out in the street.

“Hello, Buddy!” the voice greeted him.

“Oh, Tom!” Buddy shouted. “Oh, Tom, something fierce has happened!”

“What?”

“Brick is gone!”

“Gone?”

“Yes! I chained him up last night and he was here in his kennel when I went to bed. I

saw him in the moonlight. But when I came down just now he was gone!"

"Oh, gee!" murmured Tom Gordon. "Where'd he go?"

"That Gypsy came in the night and took him. The chain isn't broken, so somebody unsnapped it off Brick's collar. Look!"

Tom examined the chain as carefully as had Buddy.

"That's right," he agreed. "Somebody came in and stole Brick."

"I'm going to that Gypsy camp and get him back!" Buddy said.

"Sure! I'll go with you! Come on!"

"Mother wants to go with me," Buddy said. "She'll be out in a minute."

Just then along came Harry Clee, whistling. But he soon stopped his joyful notes when Buddy called:

"Somebody stole Brick last night!"

"No!" cried Harry, finding it hard to believe. "They did?"

"Sure!" added Tom. "Look," and he

held up the dangling chain. "Look at this!"

"Come on!" cried Harry excitedly. "Let's go to that Gypsy camp as fast as we can. They'll skip out if we don't!"

"That's what I'm afraid of," Buddy said. "I'll go tell Mother we have to hurry."

He started toward the house but Harry said:

"Tell her we'll meet her there—at the camp. She knows where it is—over in the woods."

"Yes," Buddy said, "she knows where it is. We passed it in our auto the other day. "Hey, Mother," he called in the back door, "I'm going to that Gypsy camp with Tom and Harry. We'll wait for you there. But we got to hurry or they may skip out with Brick! Good-bye!"

Then the three boys rushed off down the street and across the open lots toward the clearing in the woods where the gay red and yellow painted wagons stood near the tent of the Gypsy fortune teller.

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE GYPSY CAMP

BUDDY MARTYNE did not mean to be impolite to his mother when he ran away in such a hurry with his two chums without waiting for her. He was so anxious about his lost dog that he could think of little else. Tom and Harry, also, were anxious and they thought it would be easy for Mrs. Martyne to follow them to the Gypsy camp.

Buddy's mother was quite surprised when, a few minutes later, having gone in the house to change her dress, she came out to find her little son gone.

"Why, where is Buddy?" she asked Lola.

"Oh, Tom and Harry came along," answered the maid, "and they all ran down the street together. I couldn't stop 'em. They said for you to meet 'em at the Gypsy camp."

"Oh, they shouldn't have done that," said Mrs. Martyne, seriously.

"Is there any danger?" Lola asked.

"No, not exactly *danger*," Mrs. Martyne answered. "Gypsies nowadays, don't do any harm. The police watch them too closely. But Buddy and his friends are too young to know how to get a stolen dog back all by themselves. An older person should go with them."

"They're smart little boys, though," said Lola. "Very smart."

"Yes," admitted Buddy's mother. "Well, it's too late now; they've gone. But I think I'll take the car and go down to Mr. Martyne's office and tell him about it. He went so early he doesn't yet know Brick is missing. I'll have him go with me to the Gypsy camp to see that the boys don't get into mischief."

"I guess it would be a good idea," Lola answered. "But if Brick is anywhere around, Buddy and those other boys will get him."

"They may if that Gypsy man helps them

as he said he would," went on Buddy's mother. "Dear me! It's too bad Brick is missing just when he is needed for the school play."

"That isn't until afternoon," Lola remarked. "Maybe, by that time, Buddy will have his dog back."

"Oh, I hope so," murmured Mrs. Martyne. "I surely hope so."

And while she was getting out the car to drive down town to her husband's law office, Buddy and his chums were hurrying across the fields toward the woods where they had seen the Gypsy camp. The trees were no longer green, for there had been several frosts and the branches were getting bare. So it was easier to see some distance through the woods than in the summer time.

"What are you going to do first, Buddy?" asked Tom as he tramped along on one side of his chum while Harry was on the other side.

"I'm going right into that camp and see if I can find that man with the gold ear rings."

"That's the best thing to do," decided Harry. "I guess he's the father to that Kurdy fellow."

"No, he's his uncle," said Buddy. "But he can make him mind all right. Gee! I hope we get Brick back!"

"So do I!" echoed Harry.

"And in time for the show!" added Tom. "If we don't, everything will be spoiled!"

They hurried on through the woods. Half way to the Gypsy camp the boys came to a sudden stop as Buddy cried:

"Listen! What's that?"

He had heard a rustling in the forest carpet of dried leaves, off to one side of the path, and something seemed to be moving beneath them.

"Maybe it's Brick!" cried Tom.

But it was only a gray squirrel which scrambled up off the ground, made a leap for a tree and quickly got on the far side of it where the boys could not see him.

"He's looking for nuts," said Harry.

"He's looking at us now," spoke Buddy for the squirrel, feeling that he was safe, had thrust his head around a short, broken branch and was regarding the boys with bright eyes.

"Run along!" called Tom. "We won't hurt you! We're looking for a dog—not squirrels."

The boys started off again and soon, through the trees, had a glimpse of something brightly glittering in the morning sun.

"There it is!" cried Buddy. "The Gypsy camp!"

It was some of the mirrors on the sides of the gay red and yellow wagons that were sparkling in the sunshine.

"They haven't gone, anyhow," said Tom.

"No," agreed Harry. "And if they've got Brick we'll make 'em give him back!"

A few minutes later, pushing boldly on, they were in the midst of the Gypsy camp. In the open doors of the auto vans were sitting men and women Gypsies who looked at the boys curiously. In the tent, before which was

the canvas picture of the big hand, a young woman was sitting in a rocking chair. She was the fortune teller.

Scattered about the camp were several other tents and tied near them were horses, for not all the Gypsies had autos. Some traveled in big wagon vans, drawn by horses. But each wagon and auto van was gaily painted and one and all had many mirrors flashing in the sun.

Buddy and his friends rather expected to see the Gypsies cooking their breakfast at camp fires, or in kettles suspended from three sticks over a blaze. But, instead, the wanderers used oil stoves which may make it easier to get a meal but which do not make such a pretty picture as does an open fire.

As the boys walked through the camp, a big man, who seemed to be a sort of leader, came out of one of the wagons. He, too, had gold rings in his ears but was not the man to whom Buddy and his friends had talked some time before.

“What you boys want?” asked this man and

his voice wasn't very friendly. He scowled.

"Where's Kurdy?" asked Buddy boldly. He remembered the name of the tall Gypsy lad but did not know the name of the friendly man.

"What you want of Kurdy?" asked the big Gypsy.

"I want to see if he's got my dog, Brick," Buddy answered.

"Kurdy no here," said the man. "Kurdy gone away."

Buddy's heart began to feel very heavy. He looked at his chums. They, too, showed by their faces, how anxious they were. But Buddy was not going to give up so easily.

"Then where's Kurdy's uncle?" he asked.

"Oh—Kurdy's uncle! You want him?"

"Yes," said Buddy boldly. "Kurdy's uncle."

"Over there!" The big Gypsy pointed to the largest and finest auto van in the camp. It was a brighter red and a gayer yellow than any of the others and had more mirrors.

"Come on, fellows!" called Buddy.

As they approached this auto, they saw, stepping out of it, the man with the gold rings in his ears—the man who had scolded Kurdy. His eyes lighted up at the sight of Buddy and his chums.

"Hello, boys!" he greeted them kindly. "Found any more lost horses?"

He spoke better English than the other man.

"We aren't looking for lost horses this time," Buddy said. "But somebody took my dog Brick, last night, and I thought maybe he was here. That Kurdy said he was going to get him and——"

"Ha! Is Kurdy up to more of his tricks?" cried the friendly Gypsy man. "If he is——"

The big Gypsy came across the dried grass and talked for a while to his companion in his own language.

"Kurdy hasn't been here all night," the friendly Gypsy said, a little later, to the boys. "He has gone away, his big brother tells me. I don't see how he could have your dog."

Buddy broke in with a sudden shout, pointing to one side of the camp:

“There’s Kurdy now!” cried the red-haired boy. “And he’s got Brick with him! Look!”

Coming toward the middle of the clearing was the tall Gypsy lad. Trying to pull away from him was poor Brick, held fast with a rope!

CHAPTER XX

THE RED CROSS SHOW

WHAT do you know about that?" cried Tom.

"Hurrray! We've found Brick!" shouted Harry.

Buddy, after his first shout of discovery, said nothing more but he ran as fast as he could toward the Gypsy lad and the dog. Kurdy, who seemed very much surprised at seeing the three chums in the Gypsy camp, turned and started to run back through the woods the way he had come. He might have gotten away, too, taking poor Brick with him, but the friendly man, who seemed to like Buddy, cried out:

"Stop him! Don't let Kurdy run away with that dog!"

Of course he called this in Gypsy talk, but

Buddy and his chums guessed that was what was said because, right after that, two or three men sprang out of wagons behind Kurdy and caught hold of him as he was going to run away. One of the men took hold of the rope that was fastened to Brick's collar.

"There! Now you'll have your dog back," said the kind Gypsy to Buddy.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" murmured Tom.

"We'll be in time for the show yet, if we hurry," said Harry.

Buddy didn't say a word but ran forward and took the rope from the hand of one of the Gypsies that had jumped out of the wagons. Then Buddy put his arms around his pet's neck and hugged him tightly while Brick, overjoyed to be once more among friends, licked his little master's face with his tongue and whimpered softly.

"Come here, Kurdy!" ordered his uncle and the Gypsy boy, who looked angry and ashamed shuffled forward. He was held so he could not run away. Then his uncle began to

talk to him in the Gypsy language and Kurdy said a few words in reply. Then, turning to Buddy and his chums, the kind Gypsy said:

“I asked Kurdy if he took your dog and he said he did. He always tells me the truth. Kurdy is a bad boy, sometimes, and sometimes he is good. This is one of the times he was bad. He said he went to your house last night, Buddy, when everybody was asleep, and took Brick away with him.”

“But why did he do it?” asked Buddy.

“Did he want to spoil our show?” inquired Harry.

“No,” answered the kind Gypsy whose name was Monti. “Kurdy said he just took the dog for fun. He was only going to keep him here a few days to tease you and then he would have brought him back.”

“That would have been too late for the show,” said Buddy. “And if Kurdy had tied any cans on Brick’s tail maybe my dog would be so scared he’d never do any more tricks.”

“I wouldn’t have let Kurdy do that,” said

Monti. "But I am glad he didn't keep your dog any longer. Kurdy is a queer boy. Sometimes I don't know what to think about him. He plays too many tricks, but they are not nice tricks. Go, now!" he said to the Gypsy lad and the men holding him let loose of his arms.

Kurdy shuffled off among the trees. He did not once look back. Brick growled a little as he saw the Gypsy who had stolen him walking away. Brick had good reason not to like that boy.

"Well, everything is all right now," said Monti. "I am glad you boys came here to our camp when you did. We Gypsies do not want to do wrong or make any trouble. It is only once in a while that Kurdy does bad things like this. If he does it again I will punish him."

"If he takes my dog again, I will have a policeman come after him," said Buddy, boldly.

"Brick will be in no more danger," spoke

Monti. "We are going to break camp tonight and travel south. It is getting too cold for us up here, now that winter is coming on. So we will say good-bye. Take your dog with you and have your show. I wish you good luck!"

"Thank you!" echoed Buddy, Tom and Harry.

Bubbling over with happiness, now that they knew their part in the Red Cross school play would not be spoiled, the boys hurried out of the wood, Brick bounding along beside them. Out on the main road they met Mrs. Martyne who had called with the auto at her husband's law office and had brought him with her.

"Oh, so you got Brick back; didn't you?" she said when she saw Buddy, his chums and the dog walking toward her and her husband.

"Yes, Mother," Buddy answered. "I was sure we'd find Brick in the Gypsy camp, and we did." By turns he and Tom and Harry told all that had happened.

"It's a good thing those Gypsies are moving south," said Mr. Martyne. "If they hadn't I would have told the police about them. They have no right to steal dogs."

"Only Kurdy was bad," said Buddy, "and he isn't bad all the while."

"Once in a while is enough," said Mr. Martyne. "Well, hop in, boys, and we'll run you back home. Then I suppose you'll celebrate the finding of Brick by eating ice cream."

"We haven't time, Daddy," said Buddy. "We've got to get ready for the Red Cross play."

"Oh, I almost forgot about that!" chuckled the lawyer. "Well, good luck to you!"

"We've had good luck so far," said Buddy as the car stopped at his house. "I hope it keeps up, and that Brick hasn't forgotten how to do any of his tricks. I guess you didn't like being with that Gypsy all night," he went on to his dog, and by the fuss he made over his little master, anyone could tell that Brick was glad to be with him again.

Brick was given food and water, for he needed both and then Buddy carefully brushed his pet's shaggy coat, which was ruffled from having dragged through the bushes in the woods. Then Brick went to sleep until it was time to go to school for the afternoon performance.

Meanwhile Buddy, Tom and Harry got out their ragged suits and made sure they had all the things they would need in their act. An hour before the time for the show Mrs. Martyne took the boys and the dog to school in her car.

There was so much going on in and around the building, with the boy and girl performers coming and going, with some of the audience arriving early and with anxious teachers hurrying here and there to make sure all those who were to take part were on hand, that Buddy and his chums did not get much time to tell their friends what had happened in the Gypsy camp. Buddy found a moment when he could tell a little of it to Miss Thatcher.

“Oh, I’m so glad everything is all right now,” said the teacher. “It would have been a shame if your act couldn’t be given. I’m sure it will make a hit. You’re last on the program, you know.”

“It will give us a little time to practice by ourselves,” said Buddy. And, taking his chums and Brick to one of the dressing rooms, the four of them went over their act, making sure they would forget nothing. Brick did all his tricks.

Then the play began. Everything went along very well, from the opening song by the High School girls to the “fight,” which, of course was only a make believe one, between some boys of the High School who had wooden swords. Some of the primary children marched and sang and, as Mary and Agnes said were “too cute for anything!”

At last came the turn of Buddy and his chums with Brick. For this act the stage had been set to look like a forest and when the curtain went up, on came marching Tom and

Harry in such ragged suits that the sight of them set everyone in the audience laughing.

The two boys, pretending to be jolly tramps, talked a while and then Harry said:

“I wish we had a dog!” To this Tom added:

“And if we had another fellow there would be three of us and three is always lucky.”

This was the signal for Brick to bark, which he did when Buddy pulled one ear. For Buddy and Brick were on the stage all this time, but hidden from sight behind a lot of potted palms that represented bushes.

And as soon as Brick barked Buddy pretended to awaken from a long sleep and went out to join the other two boys, who made believe they were as much surprised to see him as Buddy was to see them.

Then Buddy talked, saying he was a lone little “tramp,” and that he had been wishing for company.

“Let’s travel around together!” proposed Tom.

"If your dog could do tricks," said Harry to Buddy, pretending that he didn't know about Brick, "why, we could go about giving little shows and make money."

"My dog can do tricks!" said Buddy. "Here. Brick, show 'em!"

This was the real beginning of the act and from then on Brick went through all his tricks, with the help of Buddy, Tom and Harry. The dog shook hands, walked on his hind legs carrying a little wooden gun, he walked on his front legs and turned forward and backward somersaults.

All this delighted the audience very much and when Buddy told Brick to play "dead," and the dog stretched out limp on the stage, every one thought that was the end of the act. But there was more to come.

"Fire!" suddenly cried Buddy and then he and his chums stood in line, bending their backs as in leap-frog and over them sailed Brick just like a circus dog.

Buddy, Tom and Harry made their final

bows and hurried off the stage, with Brick who seemed as delighted as were the boys over the success of the act. But even with the performers off the platform the clapping kept up.

“What’s the matter?” asked Tom.

“They want more,” said Miss Thatcher who stood at one side of the stage.

“But there isn’t any more!” said Harry.

“Oh, yes there is!” said Buddy with a funny twinkle in his eyes.

And then, out on the stage walked that cute little kitten which Miss Thatcher had found in her paper basket one day. At the sight of the little maltese pussy the crowd grew quiet and some girls murmured:

“Oh, isn’t she sweet!”

Wonderingly Tom and Harry watched what Buddy was doing. He fastened on the back of Brick, by means of straps, a basket marked with a large Red Cross. Brick seemed to know what was coming for he wagged his tail.

“Go out and get her now, Brick!” ordered

Buddy, snapping his fingers. "Get pussy!"

Then, to the surprise of everyone except Buddy and Miss Thatcher, who had practiced this little trick in secret, Brick ran out on the stage. He crossed over to where the kitten stood and there the dog lay down. At the same time, off to one side and out of sight of the audience, Buddy pulled a long string fastened to a cloth-covered board that was hidden in the basket. The board flapped out and made a little inclined runway from the stage to the basket on the dog's back.

And then as Brick barked, the kitten ran up the board and jumped into the basket and as soon as she was safely in, Brick ran off the stage, wagging his tail as hard as he could.

"Wow! That was dandy!" cried Tom.

"The best ever!" added Harry. "How'd you think of that, Buddy?"

"Oh, Miss Thatcher thought of it," was the answer. And from the way the audience clapped at this closing act of the Red Cross

play there was no doubt but what it was a great success.

“It’s the best school play we ever had,” said Miss Thatcher to some of the other teachers later in the afternoon. “And if a good crowd comes out tonight we’ll make a lot of money for the Red Cross.”

Well, the crowd at night was even larger than the one in the afternoon and Brick and the boys did even better. While as for the dog and cat act, it made such a hit again that the audience wanted to see it done over again. So Brick and Basket had to do it.

This brought the performance to an end and everybody went home happy, most of all Buddy and his boy chums with their wonderful dog, Brick.

“Won’t we have good times with him when snow comes!” cried Tom.

“We sure will!” echoed Harry.

But the further adventures of the dog and his red-haired master must be put into another book. And that will be called: “Buddy and

His Winter Fun, or A Boy in a Snow Camp."

On Monday, when school was in session again after the Red Cross play of Saturday, Miss Thatcher said to her class when the reading hour came:

"Instead of taking your books, I am going to have Buddy talk to you. Stand up, Buddy!"

"Why—why, Miss Thatcher, what do you want me to do?" asked the wondering boy.

"I want you," said the smiling teacher, "to tell us how you and Tom and Harry went to the Gypsy camp to get Brick."

"Oh—that!" laughed Buddy. "That wasn't anything much!" But he told the story just as you have read it in this book.

"Oh," whispered Mary Norse to fat Agnes Fleck when the story was finished, "I think Brick is the loveliest dog in the world."

"So do I," answered Agnes with a giggle. "Even if he did run away with my stockings!"





